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# Dance in Canada au Danse



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bows out in glory**

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# Dance in Canada Danse au

Issue Number 39 Spring 1984 Printemps

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# Annette av Paul

## A Fond Farewell and a Fresh Beginning

By Kati Vita

This much is history:

Paul, Annette av (also Wiedersheim-Paul); b. Stockholm, 1944) Swed. dancer. Studied at Royal Swed. B. School; joined Royal Swed. B. 1962. Created Katerina in Grigovich's Stockholm prod. of *The*

*Stone Flower* (1962), and roles in Tudor's *Echoing of Trumpets* (1963) and Macdonald's *While The Spider Slept* (1965). Married Macdonald; has often appeared as guest in his bs. for the Royal Winnipeg B. (e.g. *Rose La Tulippe*, 1966) and other comps.

Principal dancer of the Royal Swed. B. until 1972; and now freelance. (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Ballet*, Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 406.)

At the farewell gala, held at Montreal's Place des Arts on February 11, 1984, Annette av Paul's 40th birthday, there were curtain calls and speeches, floral tributes, telegrams, kisses galore and a CBC-TV crew filming from the wings while contralto Maureen Forrester sang Happy Birthday. Afterward, at the reception, where everybody was Somebody, there was a graceful marzipan ballerina atop a gigantic chocolate cake, and wall-to-wall nostalgia.

The woman being fêted, a dazzling green-eyed blonde, wore a long white gown and glowed from within.

Next Tuesday, at 9:30 a.m. sharp, Annette av Paul was back at the barre, at the *place d'honneur*, at the front of the rehearsal studio, that she had earned during 14 years as reigning ballerina with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, the territory she had just given notice she was about to relinquish.

### Overwhelmed by genuine affection

The gala, which would be reported next morning on cross-country radio and television, had been, like so much else about a career on stage, a carefully orchestrated *trompe l'oeil* production. Annette would continue to dance past this 1,072nd performance with les Grands Ballets; there would be a *Swan Lake* and *Lilac Garden* coming up in March, and a nine-week tour to the orient that Annette herself had helped to set up.

All week she had been willing herself to treat *The Night* as "just another show in Saskatoon" but when it finally came to an end, she found herself overwhelmed by the genuine affection that suffused what could have been just another show biz event.

It was coming to her; she had paid her dues. For most of that Saturday night audience it may have been sentimental hoopla but Annette av Paul had been working towards this moment for 32 years.

She had been eight years old when she first caught a train with her mother in



Annette, age nine, on holiday in Sweden. "I shall always remember her as the most beautiful and skinniest child", says choreographer Antony Tudor.

suburban Rönninge and travelled the 30 km to Stockholm for her first ballet lessons. Her teacher thought she had talent and, six months later, so did the Royal Swedish Opera's Ballet School which took Annette and four others from 500 auditioning that year.

"I shall always remember her as the most beautiful and skinniest child in the school", recalls choreographer Antony Tudor, later head of the Royal Swedish Ballet.

"I looked so funny in those days", Annette chuckles. "I had long legs and knobby knees, a little short body and these huge feet. At school kids would look at my feet and say that they were deformed".

The long legs and big feet signalled a body born to dance, her cool Nordic beauty a natural for the stage. Habits of hard work grew naturally out of the Lutheran work ethic and as a response to her parents' total commitment.

### ***A peripatetic ancestry: a bohemian milieu***

Comparing notes decades later with tennis star Björn Borg, who had lived nearby, she found they had trodden parallel paths. "His parents took him to tennis practice; mine travelled with me to the city five times a week, come rain or come shine. The time it took!", Annette marvels. "And I wasn't even an only child."

The eclectic bohemian milieu at home instilled in all four children a longing for creativity and a rebellious fighting spirit. Annette dances, her sister teaches music, one brother became a *cause célèbre* in Sweden when he battled authorities to legalize natural medicines and the youngest has just written a musical about drug abuse.

Her peripatetic ancestry converged from Prussia (Wiedersheim) and Italy (Pollini, shortened to Paul) to settle in Sweden 150 years ago. Shake the family tree and writers, painters, dancers, musicians come tumbling pell mell from the branches. A long ago Wiedersheim-Paul even fought at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham; another became a sheriff in Chicago.

Her paternal grandfather, Adolf Paul, was a well known author, closely involved with the young Turks of the Scandinavian avant garde. Strindberg and Munch were friends. Sibelius, a class mate in Berlin, wrote incidental music for his play, *King Kristian II*.

Almost prophetically, he wrote a biography of the eighteenth century Italian ballerina, La Barberina, equally famous for her entrecats huit and scandalous love affairs. Adolf Paul died the year before Annette was born but his kindred spirit still bolsters her in times of need.



Stockholm, 1962. With Yuri Grigorovitch, Soviet choreographer of *The Stone Flower*.

"I remember dancing the Grand Pas from Paquita which is a very old fashioned ballet and very tricky. Minkus' music is so tacky that if it's not played well, you can't get it right...and I just couldn't get it right; the feeling wasn't there, I didn't feel honest going on stage with it. And suddenly I thought of my grandfather", — the timbre of her voice changes as she smiles at the memory — "and I thought, he would have loved this! And that just released the whole performance."

It is not an isolated instance. "Fouettés are so horrendous", Annette grimaces, "but when I think of Elizabeth, my brother's little daughter", and she is already showing snaps of a small, cherubic blonde, "there is no problem. It's all neat and fun and I finish them and they're divine."

Her roots obviously sustain her. The big red wooden house in Rönninge, where her mother still lives and, at 77, still gives piano lessons, was always filled with music and the children "listened with big ears" to "wild Sunday afternoon discussions about philosophy".

"We had a really great childhood", Annette muses. "We never had any money.

I remember winters when there was no heat or charcoal in the house and my parents would take us out to the back balcony and rub us with snow to make us hardy."

There was a lot of warmth nonetheless. "Ours was a crazy family", says Annette happily. "We were all painting or drawing; my sister sang, she played the piano and harp but for violin practice she was banished to the basement because none of us could stand it. I was a tomboy and I played soccer with the boys. If my teacher had known, she would have killed me but it's so easy to become totally absorbed in the ballet world, to become sterile, and I've always wanted to be real."

As in Victorian novels, reality was never far. "Often my father would paint just in exchange for food. Luckily, we had a wonderful, wild garden where we grew vegetables to tide us over. We knew things were tight but somehow we never really feared life."

"My father was an idealist. he was basically a painter", says Annette pointing to a painting of a waterfall spilling over a precipice that has pride of place above her desk, "but he did a million other things."

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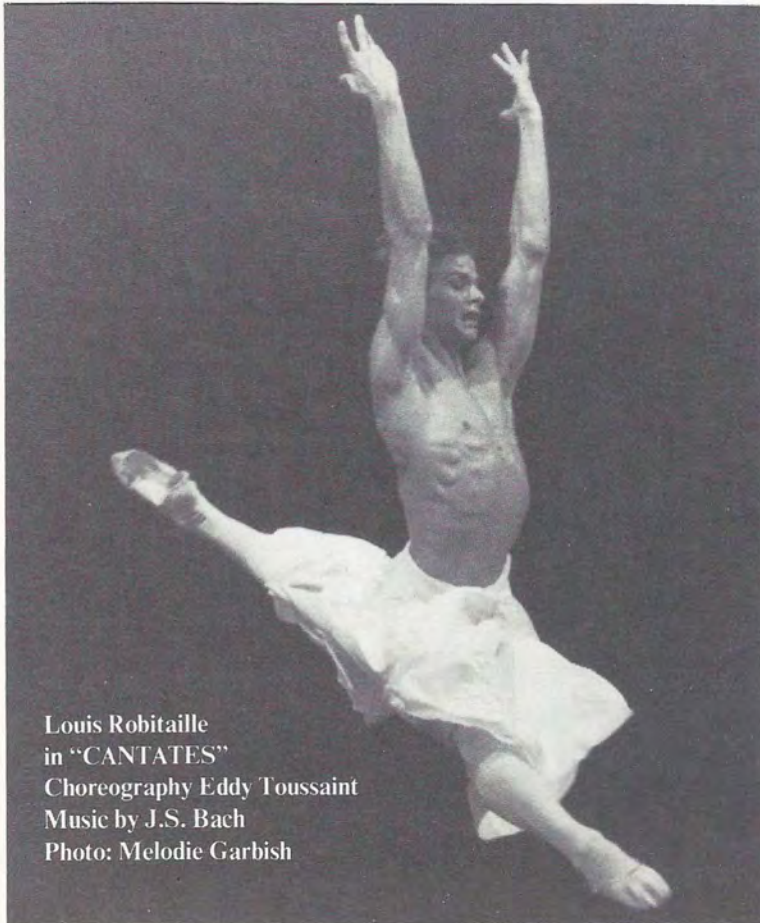
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"He taught lighting for photography, and handicapped people how to write, he lectured on the history of wigs and costumes and he illustrated dictionaries. He worked a lot at home but sometimes he would just take his easel and disappear into the mountains for a couple of weeks to paint".

"My mother wasn't a dancer but she'd had dance training and she gave classes to small children and to housewives. I often went with her; we'd go by sleigh and take along our old, hand-cranked record player. It was a real antique".

Post-war Sweden was just emerging from decades of isolation and when foreign dance companies came to town, Annette's father sketched them. "Both he and my mother took classes in Hindu dance from Ram Gopal", Annette recalls. "They thought it was great because all that stamping kept your feet warm. I was so impressed, I remember for my first talent show at school I put my mother's curtain rings around my ankles and went as Ram Gopal".

### Child among the stars

But like a long line of dancers before her, (Robert Helpmann traces his career to a childhood glimpse of Pavlova) Annette was smitten even earlier. She was an impressionable eight year old when she saw her first ballet, a Finnish legend called *The Earth and the Wings*. "From that day forth", she says seriously, "I knew that I wanted to be a dancer, and I wanted to be a good dancer. If you don't aim high, you won't get anywhere".

"Later on I may have cried every Thursday night after class from sheer exhaustion but I never had to struggle like all my friends at school, trying to figure out what to do with my life".

Annette entered the Royal Swedish Opera's Ballet School at a time of renewal. Traditional subservience to the operatic repertoire came to an end with the arrival of Mary Skeaping, who had danced with Pavlova and was a specialist in mounting classical and historical ballets. Skeaping was followed by Antony Tudor, a master of psychological nuance and contemporary dance entered the repertoire with Birgit Cullberg and Ivo Cramér in the mid fifties. Massine and Balanchine also entrusted works to the Swedes. Annette's training had a foot in the best of both worlds — and not just ballet, either.

"The children formed a pool of talent that was on call whenever the opera needed a crowd scene", she says, reaching for another photograph. "This is me in Tannhauser. I was in Carmen with Kerstin Meyer — she got top billing of course; I sang in Turandot with Jussi Björling and



As The Princess in Brian Macdonald's production of *The Firebird*; New York, Harkness Ballet, 1967.

Birgit Nilsson, and I was on stage with Ingrid Bergman when Roberto Rossellini brought her Joan of Arc to Stockholm".

"I'd like people to know that all that existed and that it had great value. There is so much that I would like to transmit", she sighs with that "ou-sont-les-neiges-d'antan" look in her eyes.

"The Opera House used to be so beautiful! They've rebuilt it now — I danced at the reopening gala there last summer with David La Hay — and do you know, my dressing room is gone. It's like they wiped out my past. We had a company of 75 dancers and 115 in the orchestra. "Here", she makes a sweeping gesture that encompasses a continent, "we're lucky if we have 40 musicians. It was non-pareil training and it was all free".

Nonetheless, she feels she got away just in time.

"All that paternalism robs Swedes of initiative", she says with regret. "They frown on private enterprise. Would you believe, one weekend when I was practising on my own, I was actually turfed out of the studio because, I was told, we were not being paid to work overtime? That kind of

clock watching doesn't produce artists; it's stifling".

"Dancers in Sweden are given contracts for life; you dance until you are 46 and then you get your pension. So you see a great many aging dancers who don't care any more, and they are still dancing, and they cannot be fired because they are there for life. I decided right from the start that I wasn't going to go on until I was fired or until I started slipping downhill".

"Annette has always seemed to me to be ice, devoured by fire", says an ardent admirer given to purple prose.

Some of that fire must have been evident even at age 17 when Bolshoi choreographer Yuri Grigorovich, visiting from Moscow to mount *The Stone Flower* in Stockholm, plucked her out of the school to dance the lead role of Katerina.

Pictures of the time show the determined jut of the av Paul chin and huge, black-fringed eyes in a dainty face...just like the Katerina doll the wardrobe department gave her as a memento which, hardly the worse for wear, she has carried to every single performance since *The Stone Flower* première on February 28, 1962.



Oslo, 1973: guest star of The Norwegian Ballet, seen here rehearsing for *The Nutcracker* with partner Jens Graff.

On opening night she got 42 bouquets and had them duly photographed for posterity, laid out on her mother's green carpet. Overnight she became the toast of Stockholm. She was still a child — "17 in those days corresponded to 14 today" — carrying full responsibility for filling the Opera House. But she knew she had a foot in the door.

The catalyst who propelled her through the door two years later was Canadian choreographer Brian Macdonald. He was on his way to the U.S.S.R. on a Canada Council scholarship when he paused briefly in Stockholm to set his *Aimez-Vous Bach?* on the company. And went on his way.

"For some reason", says Annette, 20 years later still somewhat puzzled, "I cut out Brian's photograph from the house programme and stuck it on the piano at home. I didn't expect ever to see him again but he came back in March".

They went out a couple of times. "We had about 100 words to communicate with because", she explains, "I'd flunked English in school". The chemistry must have been potent because on Walpurgisnacht, when there are bonfires all over Sweden and everyone greets the coming of spring, Macdonald proposed.

Annette still has the wispy brown chiffon dress she wore that night. It is very subtle,

like Swedish spring: a French haute couture model that cost her an arm and a leg. "I walked to the Opera every day for a month to save tram fares; I ate old cans of spaghetti, beans, whatever was left in the cupboard — but it was worth it!"

They were married in a tiny church on a nearby island the following December. Elizabeth Söderström, a close friend from the Opera, sang Grieg's *I Love You*. "There wasn't a dry eye in the house", jokes Annette.

Becoming Mrs. Brian Macdonald also meant taking on a stepson just 10 years younger than herself. Although having a younger brother herself mitigated the task, in retrospect she wonders at her courage. She saw Wyatt through a troubled adolescence — "at one point he phoned me from Wales to announce: Ma, I've quit school and I'm hitch hiking to Sweden" — but, she says, "he's wonderful and just brilliant. He received the Governor General's Gold Medal when he was only 14. And", she adds with obvious relief, "the tables have turned". On a recent visit to Toronto, it was bearded Brian who slouched into a restaurant in sweater and jeans to meet his clean shaven son, spiffy in jacket and tie.

Marrying Brian Macdonald had an incalculable effect on Annette's career. When she left Sweden, in the words of a

review that followed her first *Swan Lake*, she was "half-way through the pond".

As Macdonald, then resident choreographer of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet moved around the world, successively becoming artistic director of the Harkness Ballet in New York and eventually of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Annette moved with him, a constant Galatea to Macdonald's Pygmalion.

There was understandable envy in dance circles. "Annette had to prove to the company that she deserved all those roles", says Vincent Warren, a favorite ex-partner. "I must say, Brian helped her by giving her all those challenges. He is a strict task master; she'd be ready to drop and he'd push her just a little more. Brian had a very beautiful object in his hands and he analyzed it and tempered it to make the weak points stronger".

"But", observes Toronto critic, Penelope Doob, "Annette always gives a hundred per cent which is not an invariable quality in dancers".

Annette is wounded by suggestions that she traded on her clout as the boss's wife. "I had to wait 10 years until he'd let me dance *Time Out of Mind*", she complains mildly. She does not define their relationship in terms of roles but as one of shared creativity, "bouncing ideas across the dinner table", an aspect of her career that will be hardest to let go.

### ***The dancer who gives a hundred per cent***

"Theirs is a marriage based not only on love but on mutual admiration", says Vincent Warren. Brian believes in Annette's line and Annette believes that Brian is *the* Canadian choreographer".

For all her sisyphian efforts in search of the elusive goal, Annette is not a competitor. "Brian's energy level is much higher than mine and in 19 years of living with him I've realized that I can't keep up with his schedule; so I've stopped trying".

"Here's a woman who was a genuine star in her homeland", muses a close associate, "and she's had to accept playing second fiddle to Brian's international success. But if it's presented problems in their marriage, I'm not aware of it. There was a time, a couple of years ago, when Brian was everywhere but home and she was feeling a little lonely and it was a hard time for both of them. Their long distance phone bills are astronomical. But they have survived this".

Macdonald is fiercely protective of his wife. "When I signed Brian as a personal client, a condition of the contract was that I sign Annette as well", says his press agent. He tirelessly supervises the minutest details



of her career. Says one publicist: "he can be quite heavy handed".

"Even so", marvels one critic whom Brian had taken to task for neglecting to mention his wife in a review, "instead of being counter productive, it increases one's admiration for Annette's ability to elicit such loyalty and caring".

Off-stage accolades are unanimously reminiscent of depositions at a canonization hearing. Sacha Belinsky, her first partner at GBC, who dropped her once in rehearsal, causing serious injury, says quietly: "she never blamed me or said a word to make me feel bad". An arch foe of Macdonald's calls her "a lovely lady, a model for us all" and contents himself by adding: "they're proof positive that opposites DO attract each other".

Of all the tributes read out at the Place des Arts, (...une aussi brillante carrière...P.E.T.) choreographer Fernand Nault's wire from Atlanta summed up the consensus best. It spoke of the security that her professionalism had given the company, of an "unforgettable première danseuse and a human being of extraordinary qualities".

### **The serenity and insight of a practising Buddhist**

Some inkling of those qualities was on view for everyone to see when Annette handed over the first bouquet of the evening to a promising youngster who had just distinguished herself in a role Annette had created.

In her life, as in her art, Annette is, first and foremost, a team player. She is a practising Buddhist, with the emphasis on practising. "I read and chant 45 minutes in the morning and half an hour each night. It's not a magic wand that dissipates all your cares; more like a good breakfast, spiritual protein, that gives you strength for the rest of the day".

Sixteen years ago when the culture shock of finding herself in the thick of the New York dance scene threatened to engulf her, she responded to the serenity and insight that Buddhism offered. "It has helped me to keep things in perspective", she says, her sense of humor surfacing, "though sometimes I have to chant a LOT".

If her name never became a household word, it was because her priorities changed.

Overwhelmed by the "technical monsters in New York who could jump higher, turn faster and balance longer", she decided that there was more to dance than technique, a feeling reconfirmed on a French tour when Christine Hennessy, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's dramatic star, was awarded the *Étoile d'or* for Macdonald's *Pas d'Action*.

"I know myself as an individual", reflects



With Jacques Drapeau and Maureen Forrester in Brian Macdonald's *Adieu Robert Schumann*.

Annette. "I knew then that my style was softer and that it would take longer to be recognized but this was my language and only I could say what I wanted to say".

Her style has been variously described as subtle, elusive, aloof, adjectives that elicit an enigmatic smile from her. Says Penelope Doob: "she has a warmth, a generosity, a mature presence, that will be missed". To Jacob Siskind of *The Ottawa Citizen*, "there is something about her carriage, the angle of neck to shoulder, that's instantly recognizable as Annette".

Tobi Tobias of *New York* magazine was not at a loss for adjectives in 1982 when she wrote: "Her compact body and dazzling Nordic coloring emphasize the clarity and decisiveness of her movements. Even her flimsiest roles benefit from her theatrical wisdom; she knows when a movement needs an extra fillip, when stillness, to make it project".

There was a time when Annette aspired to London Festival Ballet and wanted to audition for Beryl Grey, "but she couldn't come for three days", after all these years the memory still rankles, "because she had to have her hair done". If she did not pursue the matter, it was a conscious choice, says Maureen Forrester, an old pal, "to have a husband waiting for her at home instead of washing her tights in a different hotel room each night". Perhaps she simply rationalized that being a big fish in a smaller pond would give her more opportunities to dance and certainly at Les Grands Ballets Canadiens she has had that.

The porcelain exterior camouflages a core of tempered steel but 120 performances a

year have taken their toll.

"My doctor tells me my body is like a 25-year-old's but my feet are 65", says Annette ruefully. Dancing is never finite, like an athletic record that, once achieved, is yours for ever and such is its bitter irony that when you finally manage to weave all the strands together, the body rebels and the heart must listen.

Annette almost retired last September when the effort began to outweigh the joy. She returned home after a three-month absence — "I don't care if I never see my suitcase again" — and threw herself into an orgy of chutney making. The neatly labelled jars in her kitchen are silent witnesses to her efforts at normalcy.

"The one thing I am really looking forward to is having time", she says. "As an artist you are always giving, and that's what I want to do, but there is so little time to refill, to nourish yourself, to ask: what do I want?"

Before Christmas she was so exhausted that she went into hospital for two days of tests, only to be told what she already knew: that she was tired. Since then, a new régime of vitamins has rejuvenated her. With added stamina, she jokes, "I sometimes wonder why I'm retiring; I feel terrific".

She is not afraid of retirement. She has already had a couple of dry runs. Eleven months off with an injury, and having to retrain her body completely after the raked Swedish stages, have given her a taste of enforced solitude and lack of immediate purpose. But she is toying with enough ideas to make a mockery of the word.

"There is a loom in the front room that I



Surrounded by past and present members of Les Grands Ballets and by friends and colleagues from across Canada and abroad, Annette av Paul acknowledges the standing ovation of the Places des Arts audience at the special tribute held in her honour, Montreal, 11 February, 1984.

haven't quite figured out yet", she enumerates, "I want to see if I still enjoy painting as much as I did when I was child and I'm dying to try pottery. I want to get my driving license finally and catch up with my reading — find out what's going on in the world. And I want to brush up my languages. Maybe open a flower shop, though not immediately because that would be another kind of bondage. And I want to work for the peace movement; I've known that potentially we can all get along ever since I first went to an UNESCO camp for kids when I was 10".

"I think I would enjoy helping to set Brian's ballets", she says, "I do know what he wants and I have done it before".

Like the practical Swedish housewife she is, she wants to put her experience to optimal use. "I have danced in over 100 ballets and I would like to transmit it all", she says fervently. "There are subtleties you learn over the years. I've done Brian's, Tudor's and MacMillan's versions of Romeo and Juliet. I've worked with Nureyev, Fonteyn, Bruhn and Orlando Salgado from Cuba. Veronica Tennant and I shared an acting role in a musical. I've had people like Glen Tetley and John Butler create for me. I danced in the CBC's first color spectacular, *Rose La Tulippe*; and for Swedish TV and the BBC".

The reverie comes to a momentary stop as she contemplates her kitchen. Even there, the alpine calendar, mint tea from Fauchon's, green tea from Japan, are casual reminders of two globetrotting careers.

"I wanted to dance a lot and I have. I have done Sugar Plum and Swan Lake and Sleeping Beauty and Giselle. Sure, I missed out on Miss Julie, and even though I loved creating the Princess in Brian's gorgeous *Firebird*, I'd always had my eye on that bird — I guess no one can dance everything but I've had my share. I feel very good about it. I don't regret one step".

She flashes a small smile at the classic exit line but there is no mistaking the intensity as she reiterates: "all this will come in useful somehow".

#### ***"I don't regret one step".***

It is dusk and the candles are lit, a Swedish custom that Brian Macdonald adopted with alacrity. The spacious ground floor apartment — "our first real home on this continent" — is their refuge. A tiny urban garden yields blackberries that Annette turns into brilliant purple schnapps by adding sugar and vodka. "It cures every ailment", she says jestingly of the afternoon ritual. Two cats nestle in a wicker basket, still as ornaments. One is Tiger, the other's asymmetrical marking immediately got her

dubbed Agnes. "It is an in joke", explains Annette. "We were invited to Agnes de Mille's one day and she must have been interrupted in her preparations when she came to open the door for us because one eye was made up and the other wasn't".

There is no child in the house, a source of muted anguish to both. At age 40, with one miscarriage behind her, Annette has not abandoned hope. "There will be time for everything soon", she says, "maybe even a baby".

Macdonald towers over his 5'2" wife and contemplates her affectionately. Supper time is approaching and the topic switches to Annette's prowess as a cook. Brian's eyes turn heavenward in a mock swoon as he recalls one memorable ad hoc creation of chicken and peaches, the non-existent recipe lost for ever. Preparing for a new career, Annette thinks she might start with a cook book. Others think she will aim higher.

"She has worked with the best in her career", says her press agent, Joey Shulman. "That makes for very high personal standards. I have a picture of Annette in my office holding the most beautiful pose. It is perfect. It serves as a constant reminder to me that it is possible to attain perfection in one's life".

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# Making it Happen in Montreal

## Tangente's Dena Davida

By Carol Libman



Dena Davida in *Not Exactly with Difficulty but with Effort*; choreographed by Paula Ravitz.

In the beginning man — and woman — danced to express joy, exaltation, gratitude. In paintings on the tombs of Egyptian pharaohs people are dancing before the temples of the gods. In the book of Exodus we read that Miriam, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her and danced in thanksgiving for their safe passage across the Red Sea; according to the ancient Hindu legends of India, the God Shiva created the world through the rhythm of a dance.

In Montreal, overlooking the neon signs of St. Catherine Street and Bleury, there is an oasis for new, innovative dance — a place where experimentation in the art of movement is begun, nurtured, then flung out before the curious and sometimes astonished eyes of an ever-growing public.

The place is called Tangente: danse actuelle.

Tangente is a space, but more than a space. Its evolution is in keeping with the evolution of dance as an art form directly related to social, personal, even political developments of this half of the 20th century.

### *Tangente is more than a space.*

The key figure in this burgeoning activity is a youthful, bilingual American-born dancer, Dena Davida, who has made Montreal her home for seven years, and who has the drive and the ability to make things happen. A spiritual descendant of the great breakaways from conventional dance — Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham and beyond — Dena is happily balanced on the far edge of “new dance”, which is about as accurate a description as one can get in English. The French term, “danse actuelle”, is more accurate. It means what is happening *now*.

Tangente is the only artist-run space in Canada devoted exclusively to the presentation and promotion of new, innovative, experimental dance. In three years it has become the focus of new work in Quebec and its influence is felt right across the country. In the beginning about 80 per cent of the work shown came from outside Quebec (including a great deal from New

York); the rest was local. Now the balance has switched.

How did Tangente come to exist, and why in Montreal? In the late 1940s and early 50s there had been a breaking away from traditional dance, led by such choreographers as Françoise Riopelle, Jeanne Renaud and Françoise Sullivan. By the early 1970s, when Dena Davida began her summer sojourns in Montreal, there was almost no space dedicated to new dance and only two modern dance companies — Le Groupe de la Place Royale and Le Groupe Nouvelle Aire. Her own training was in theatre arts, theatre production, dance and the teaching of body movement. On her way from Minnesota, where she was studying and teaching, to visit her sister in Nova Scotia, each summer for four years she stopped in Montreal, getting acquainted with other dancers, communicating in her ever-improving high school French. While there wasn't a lot of new dance being performed, there were lots of dancers and a lot of interest in dance, theatre and poetry. Six years ago she decided to make Montreal her home.

**"... a dynamo who manages to attract to her side others who share her vision".**

In 1977, working with Chantale Pontbriand (now editor of the contemporary art magazine *Parachute*), Dena organized a series of performances by independent choreographers at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. She persuaded eight dancers to create a piece and 500 people stormed the museum to see the program. This led to a two-year series of post-modern dance performances, with most of the Judson Church people coming up from New York, and — at Dena's insistence — the inclusion of a series of showcases for Montreal and Toronto choreographers. Out of that experience grew *Qui Danse?*, an independent choreographers' cooperative, which no longer exists.

After two years of organizing performances of the work of independent dancers, jumping around to different — usually inadequate — spaces, one of Dena's colleagues, dancer Louis Guillemette, found an empty store-front with a couple of floors above, on St. Lawrence Boulevard, near de Maisonneuve. Dena, Louis and the two other originals — Howard Abrams and Silvy Panet-Raymond — took over and transformed this space into Tangente, danse actuelle. Financed by their own money, volunteer labour and by renting out space for classes, they organized a regular calendar of events. Every week-end from September through June you could witness experimental, exciting — and sometimes mystifying — work by choreographers from

Quebec and other parts of Canada and the United States.

In January of 1983 Tangente made a big move, from the 50-seat space on St. Lawrence to the former Véhicule d'Art Gallery at 307 St. Catherine West. Now up to 150 people can be seated and two large studios are busy with dance classes from 9 a.m. to midnight.

In recent months the other three originals have decided to concentrate more on their own personal careers and less on Tangente, although both Guillemette and Silvy Panet-Raymond contribute what time they can to Tangente, for example serving on the jury which must sort through the dozens of applications received each year to determine who should be invited to fill the 30 to 40 available week-end slots each season.

The key to Tangente is still, however, Dena Davida, a dynamo who manages to attract to her side others who share her vision. Joining her recently have been Johanne Charlebois (a young dancer who came to work on a government grant and stayed to help when the grant ran out), Jean-Pierre Coté, whose goal is to become a lighting designer and administrator, and Jean-Pierre Frechette, who has a small management company and donates administrative services. Other young people, mainly students, contribute time, energy and ideas. The entire staff works without salary.

People who have come up against Tangente's fierce protector say Dena Davida is a tough lady underneath the calm exterior.

Dena laughs at that. "I think it's the other way round. I've a nervous, tough exterior, and I'm fragile inside. But I'm energetic, and people will interpret that as tough, because when I have an idea I go for it".

Tangente, in actuality, runs on vision, energy, determination, plus box office receipts, rentals, small government grants, and hope.

While the Dance Division of the Canada Council does offer some help to independent choreographers and companies, there is no special category at present for funding artist-run "new dance" spaces.

"I'm grateful for the various government (federal, provincial and municipal) programs we have been able to tap into, but I look at the visual arts and how they're supported by the Canada Council, which looks with favour at artist-run spaces in that discipline and I ask why can't dancers have the same advantages? I look at Dance Theatre Workshop in New York City, with 15 years of struggle and survival and I see what a dance space has meant to the New York dance community, and I know that's what we need here.

"In fact, the exciting, innovative choreography that has been going on in New York the past ten years has been helped immeasurably by the existence of several dance spaces, such as Dance Theatre Workshop, the Riverside Church Dance Space, the Kitchen, and now there's a new one — probably the hottest dance space in New York — P.S. 122. That's a play on words. It's an old public school, but the initials also stand for Performing Space.

"And although I still have my beef with Canada Council, we have been receiving very welcome funding from other areas for special projects — chiefly the Quebec Department of Cultural Affairs and the federal Ministry of Communications".

The ambitious "Dance Exchange, New York-Montreal", the first of such magnitude for Tangente, held over three week-ends in March at Tangente, and one week-end for Canadian dancers in New York, was funded by a \$20,000 grant from Quebec under a new program called "Intervention Nouvelle", and an amount of \$38,000 from the Department of Communications for "Special Cultural Initiatives".

Each weekend program listed both American and Canadian dancers — eight New Yorkers in total and seven Canadians. Vancouver's Jennifer Mascall, who performed at Tangente February 23 to 26, joined the Quebec contingent when it performed in New York.

**"I've a nervous, tough exterior, and I'm very fragile inside".**

During the past few years, local dancers have developed loyal followings. By programming the New Yorkers with Quebec dancers, audiences were encouraged to view the out-of-towners. At the same time new Montreal compositions were showcased against the very slick and polished New York work, creating a volatile, exciting experience for both dancers and audiences.

The audience, which is growing, cross-cultural, but largely Francophone, is a special component in the success of Tangente. For the public the attraction is to be surprised, to participate in an adventure, to feel the electric connection between dancer and spectator.

"You have to be game", admits Dena. "It took me four years before I could see Post-Modern dancers and not get bewildered. I'd sit there and think they were being deliberately obscure, and that put me off. Then, as I studied and experienced more of their work I began to understand. At Tangente there's great variety. Always. Some you'll like and understand. Some you won't. The variations are endless. Some of it is easily accessible, even to the untrained

eye. But whatever happens, you have to be willing to be open, to take a chance”.

The same attraction holds true for the performers. By this time almost every exponent of the “new dance” in Canada, and many Americans as well, have danced at Tangente. Even those involved in middle-sized companies who rent middle-sized theatres find the intimacy of Tangente’s space ideal for their newer, riskier work. It is also an affordable stepping-stone for those on the rise. At Tangente it is almost impossible for the dancers to lose money. The rent is only \$100 per night, which comes out of the box office. At entrance fees of \$6 (\$5 for students), 18 people walk in the door and the space fee is covered. Performances are Thursday through Sunday at 8:30. In addition, Tangente’s full-time volunteer staff provides technical help and promotion.

#### Forging a Montreal-New York nexus.

Promotion, in fact, is continuous. Three times a year Tangente produces an attractive, glossy calendar of events, well-designed and informative. The critics come regularly and news paper and radio coverage is frequent.

The space, itself, is conducive to experimentation. It is the only space in Montreal at this moment that has no fixed seating and can be set up according to the artist’s needs, with the audience in the round, on two sides, or in a U-shape. Dancers have been known to vary the seating from night to night.

“When companies are forced to rent larger spaces, at \$400 or \$500 per night, the box office becomes so important”, comments Dena, “that the artists can’t afford to take as many chances. And then dance stagnates. You have to go for a wider public and then you can’t do certain things. The work begins to limit itself”.

What drives Dena Davida?

She laughs. “I was asked that several years ago, and I figured it out. I’m from the sixties, from the States, and had a — well, a “vision” I guess you’d call it — of individuals working together to create new approaches and new forms and alternatives

to large institutions. Here we are in the eighties and I’m surviving!

“I love dance. I’ve chosen it as my work. It’s very exciting to be able to work here in Montreal, in Canada. That’s why I live here. I’m the kind of person who tends to live in the present, but I’m learning to plan ahead, say three to five years. I’m learning to be an administrator, and to see things in terms of stages. I look at David White at the Dance Theatre Workshop in New York, and I realize the stages he has gone through to accomplish what he has in 15 years. His space is not physically larger than ours; the size of the space is never the point. Now he’s got an electronic media system, a mailing service for dancers, a poetry series, a music series. And I don’t worry that we can’t do everything right away. That’s what saves me, knowing that it goes stage by stage, and if I look at what we’ve done in just three years, I’m already amazed”.

In addition to the New York exchange, a Paris connection is being planned for next fall. For the past four years Dena has been spending part of each summer in Paris, teaching, giving workshops and last year as head of a mission for the Office Franco-Québécois pour la Jeunesse. She found that, as in London, new dance in France has been greatly influenced by the strong American touring companies, and for a while this gave rise to a style that was derivative of American work. However, this too is changing, and Montreal audiences should have a chance to see what the new, young, innovative dancers of Paris are coming up with in their search for individual styles of movement, subject and presentation.

Dena Davida, as do many dancers, makes her living as a teacher, at the University of Quebec’s Montreal campus. With that taking up a good portion of her time, and Tangente taking up a good deal more, does she resent the administrative demands made on her energy and creativity?

“It’s a delicate balance”, she admits. “I think of myself as a dance curator, a dancer, and lately I have begun to do my own choreography — something I didn’t think I would want to do. While Tangente requires a great deal of my time, it nourishes me as well. I don’t want to be an administrator

forever, that’s true. But so far I’m managing the balancing act”.

Her first effort at choreography, *Chacun pour Elle* is in itself something of a balancing act, both in its satiric look at female-male roles and in the physical demands of the piece. It took several months to develop the dance which Dena performs with partner Daniel Godbout, and which has been directed by stage director Jacques Lebel. In it Dena lifts her partner, and also ten other men! The movements range from the athletic to the lyrical. The ten men are not dancers, but are drawn from among friends who are invited to participate. The piece was unveiled at Tangente in November and has since been performed in Quebec City, Ottawa and in Alma, Quebec, where the ten men were members of the host gallery’s board of directors — astonished, but game! There is no rehearsal, but each is invited to join Dena onstage, to be lifted, held or carried in several ways.

“The role reversal is a sensitive business”, she says, grinning at the recollection. “It’s very amusing”.


She has been invited to perform at a festival in Paris in April, and *Chacun pour Elle* will be unveiled for Toronto audiences at the Dance in Canada conference this June.

Many choreographers who begin in such places as Tangente go on to enrich the repertoires of more conventional ballet and jazz ballet companies. However, whatever the spin-offs from new dance into more traditional companies, Tangente intends to stay on the cutting edge.

“There is always new work”, declares Dena Davida. “As far as individual dancers go, there can come a turning point when making your work popular and pleasing overshadows the creative aspect. But it is impossible to be both accessible and artistically honest. I would like to see people get as excited about coming to see new dance as they are about going to see new films”.

#### Editor’s note:

To receive Tangente’s calendar of events, write to 307 rue Ste-Catherine, O., Montréal, H2X 2A3, or call (514) 842-3532.



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# Women in Dance: Part I

## The Impact of the Feminine Consciousness

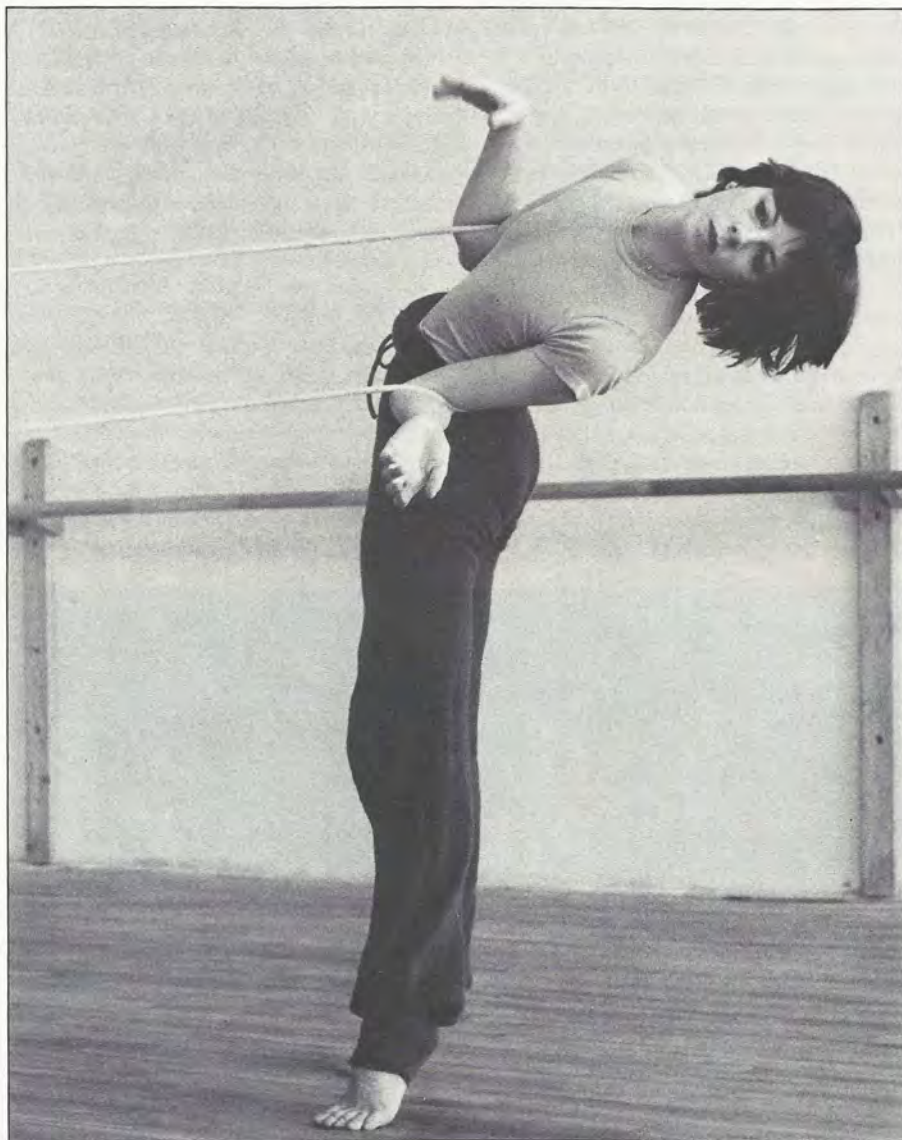
By Paula Citron

Although the virtuoso ballerinas were the focal point of 19th-century ballet, it was the men who surrounded them — the composers, choreographers, managers, teachers and critics — who kept the dancers, so to speak, on their toes. As Vancouver choreographer Paula Ross says: "Dance is a feminine art form which historically was run by men". When Isadora Duncan danced out of these Victorian restraints, her rebellion opened the floodgates for women to become choreographers and administrators in both ballet and contemporary dance — in short, to take control of their artistry and become the leaders in their field.

The dominance of women in dance has probably been helped by the fact that the art form in the 20th century has not been taken seriously by men who have generally dismissed it as superficial entertainment and a traditional role for women. Patricia Beatty (Toronto Dance Theatre) explains: "Dance was a good place for women because men liked to see us this way — graceful and sensuous. Men decided that dance belonged to women just like they decided that boxing belonged to black men. I know what it's like to be treated as a dancing girl!" In researching this article, the writer came across many stories which illustrate the cultural unimportance of dance in particular and the performing arts in general. Friends and relatives of Paula Ross tended to treat her choreography as a hobby, while Denise

**"Men decided that dance belonged to women".**

Fujiwara (T.I.D.E.) finds she gets respect from people outside the field only when she calls herself a choreographer rather than a dancer, the former application being associated with power. In the same vein, Maria Formolo (Edmonton) relates that her partner, Keith Urban, is often asked if he dances full-time, the assumption being that it is not a man's job. The father of Louise Latreille (Pointépiénu) supported her desire to dance but discouraged her brother, a talented musician, from pursuing a career in the arts. He became an engineer. As Peggy McCann (Toronto) points out, the economic reality has tended to exclude men



Pointépiénu's Louise Latreille.

from dance; the money earned is not considered sufficient to support a family and men, who respond to the profit motive more than women, are influenced by this fact. In the final analysis, men gave away control of dance because, as Leica Hardy (Toronto) says: "It was suitable for women and faggots!"

In an art form dominated by women, it becomes obvious that missing from their repertoire to any extent are the works

devoted to feminist issues, paralleling those produced by their sisters in literature, theatre and film. One reason given for this lack of political focus is the insular nature of the craft. Dance is a physical and all-consuming art, and the rigorous training lends itself to isolation. As well, women in dance have been in a privileged position. Linda Rabin (Montreal) explains: "I don't have the need to choreograph feminist issues because I have never felt threatened

by men or experienced sexism in my work. Women dancers have found utopia. They can do what they want without men imposing on their freedom. It's a woman's field". Kathryn Brown (Pavlychenko Studio) takes this theory one step further by saying that women outside dance define themselves by causes because they lack a strong sense of identity which women in dance have found in their work. "I'm a creative person first", says Brown, "and a woman second".

The lack of overt feminism in dance may also be a direct result of the art's non-verbal language; dance, except in its narrative form, does not lend itself easily to concrete issues. Content, therefore, tends to deal with abstractions in the form of pure dance, or universal themes which explore the human condition with its larger concerns. Muna Tseng (New York) elaborates: "Dance is subjective and expresses the internal world. Because men concentrate on the external world and its values, they dominate visual language such as painting. That is why dance is such a natural vehicle for the expression of women, a woman's voice. Dance does not make a political statement; instead it conveys an ideal state, an ideology, and because it is a physical language, the work validates itself by its structure, not by its content". Diane

Carrière (Montreal) adds that choreographers who do make specific statements tend to work in dance theatre, or as Maria Formolo states: "If I wanted to deal with concrete images, I would have chosen another medium". In short, to many of the women interviewed, dance and politics are dichotomous. "Is there ever a question of men's issues or men's choreography?" demands Leica Hardy. "Why then should women have to deal with women's issues. We should be making dances about 'people' issues".

Nonetheless, women choreographers have used dance for the specific purpose of making political statements — the Wallflower Order in the U.S., The Clichettes and Peggy McCann in Canada. Here are two examples illustrating feminism in dance and the reasons behind the choreography, one by a well-established artist, the other by a newcomer.

### *The lack of feminist issues*

Martine Epoque was a co-founder of Le Groupe Nouvelle Aire, a seminal force in Quebec dance whose school was the training ground for many of the province's choreographers. "I realized that experimental theatre was exploring feminism but that dance wasn't, probably because women can succeed in dance. We are surrounded by

men but there is an impression that we are not. Certain feminist questions were bothering me so I stopped talking about them and made dances instead. The first, *Madame Est Servie* (1981), deals with the conflict a woman undergoes who has both a profession and a family, but who lives with an unsympathetic man. In the second work, *Monsieur Est Servi*, I show a man's attempt to meet a mate, only to find that after marriage, she wants more freedom than he envisioned. The last piece, *Monsieur et Madame Sont Servis*, shows the relationship between a couple and against a background of romantic music, I have shown very unromantic situations. The works are funny but not funny. After *Nouvelle Aire*, I feel I'm into my second career and that I'm finding myself all over again. I'd like to see more of life on stage — older dancers, for example, to show the beauty of autumn. I now want to express myself in verité — truth".

Louise Azarello is a young Toronto choreographer who is struggling to stay in dance by juggling several waitressing jobs to make ends meet. "Dance is a performing art and should be related to the rest of the world. I think that there should be more 'woman kinds of things' in dance because I want women in the audience to be conscious of the struggle. I'm sexually harassed every day of my life by bus drivers or bosses. So much of dance, because of its abstractions, is not reaching the audience. It's hard for me to accept that people just want to dance and not think about life outside. There may be a nuclear holocaust. How can you ignore life"? Azarello's first work was a solo to the spoken text of a short story by feminist writer Grace Haley. "Wants" (1982) describes a meeting between a woman and her ex-husband, and as they talk about their relationship, it becomes clear that the man has no conception of what caused the women's unhappiness. He felt that the marriage collapsed because she did not understand his "wants"; in truth, he could not accept the fact that she had "wants" of her own. The dancer portrays the inner agony of the woman.

Doris Humphrey, the great American pioneer of modern dance, once said that it is very difficult to use the medium for specific statements as the nature of the physical vocabulary leads to wide interpretation. For example, at a Danceworks workshop in Toronto, Sherri LeBlanc's *Reflection* (1983), a piece about rape, angered many women, because one felt that one of our own had portrayed the female as provocateur, the victim getting what she deserved. In the discussion following the performance, it was discovered that the choreographer had intended the complete opposite — that the woman, simply because of her outgoing



Carol Anderson in Paul Taylor's *Aureole*.

personality, was in grave danger because a man found her a sex object. *Ice* (1974), a work by Jo Lechay of Montreal, was inspired by pictures of athletes frozen in dramatic positions and because she delights in strong movements, her five women dancers were given a very physical and athletic choreography. No one was more surprised than Lechay, however, when feminists embraced this work as a statement for the cause because her dancers were in roles counter to the usual female stereotyping.

Thus, one must conclude that choreographic works, even those of a blatantly political nature, are strictly a statement of personal expression. Women choreograph because, in the words of Paula Ross, "Dance is necessary to my well-being, a basic essential way I communicate". Women do not view dance as masculine or feminine, but as a reflection of their own experience, and this leads to the belief put forward by Karen Rimmer (Vancouver), that because a work is created by woman, it therefore stands for the essence of womanhood and thus, there is no need for overt feminism in dance. "I'm a woman", says Jo Lechay, "and I work from my uterus, my gut. My art doesn't have to be political because I make a feminist statement by the fact that I have a career, a company, a school, a husband and children".

***"Why should women have to deal with women's issues. We should be making dances about 'people' issues".***

Both Margie Gillis (Montreal) and Paula Ravitz (Toronto) point out other ramifications of women and their choreography. For Gillis, the works force the audience to redefine its stereotypical views of women. Contemporary dance has shattered the myth of the "ideal" long-legged slender ballerina. Women of all shapes and sizes are found on the stage and this in itself is liberating. Ravitz stresses the fact that most female choreographers do not think of their colleagues as men or women but as dancers. Thus, audiences are exposed to an equality unknown in the outside world and the usual stereotypes of gender do not exist. As Paula Ross says: "I have three daughters and therefore, I have a stake in what happens to women. Dance has allowed me the right to make mistakes which has led to my personal growth. I have been able to attempt anything within an understanding of my limitations. This is what I would like for my daughters". Maria Formolo believes that a woman creator can become a beacon for women everywhere, affirming feminine power through the arts, but perhaps Denise Fujiwara best sums up this philosophy. "We can inspire women through our work, not

by pointing out what is wrong, but what is possible".

For the choreographers of French Canada, this viewpoint is particularly poignant. According to Martine Epoque, the fact that women are expressing themselves openly and translating life onto the stage is a statement in itself, and she refers back to the time when most Québécois women lived a life of subservience, controlled by their fathers, husbands and priests. "Dance has been part of the awakening of the women in Quebec", says Chantal Belhumeur (Danse Partout). "Our energy is exploding and just to be creative is being political". Or as Louise Latreille states, "Feminists are talking, not doing; I'm doing"!

The feminine consciousness also has a special influence on management skills, according to Patricia Fraser and Carol Anderson, the artistic directors of Dance-makers. "Our skills are unique because woman managers create an environment of caring. Personal and human values are respected because we see our dancers as our resources. Women can also accept human frailties and are more attuned to personal sensitivities. We create companies that are families of dancers". This emphasis on humanity leads to the wider view expressed by Gillis, Rabin and Tseng, among others,

that women in dance present an antidote to the technocratic world of men and that their work is an attempt to reach harmony from discord. "Technology and materialism have warped the spirit of human nature", says Maria Formolo, "and dance is helping society by putting people in touch with their feelings". Perhaps Jo Lechay speaks for all women in dance: "There are so many catastrophic issues in the world, I ask myself what right do we have to make our little dances. This is my rationalization: in a mechanistic high tech world, by celebrating the beauty of the human body and the human spirit, we women are making a plea for humanity in an inhuman environment".

Thus, the collective feminine consciousness is seen as the keeper of the spiritual flame and the artistic works of women choreographers are, therefore, a symbol of civilization and humanity — the legacy of the leadership of women in dance.

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# In the Spotlight: Gregory Osborne

By Kevin Singen

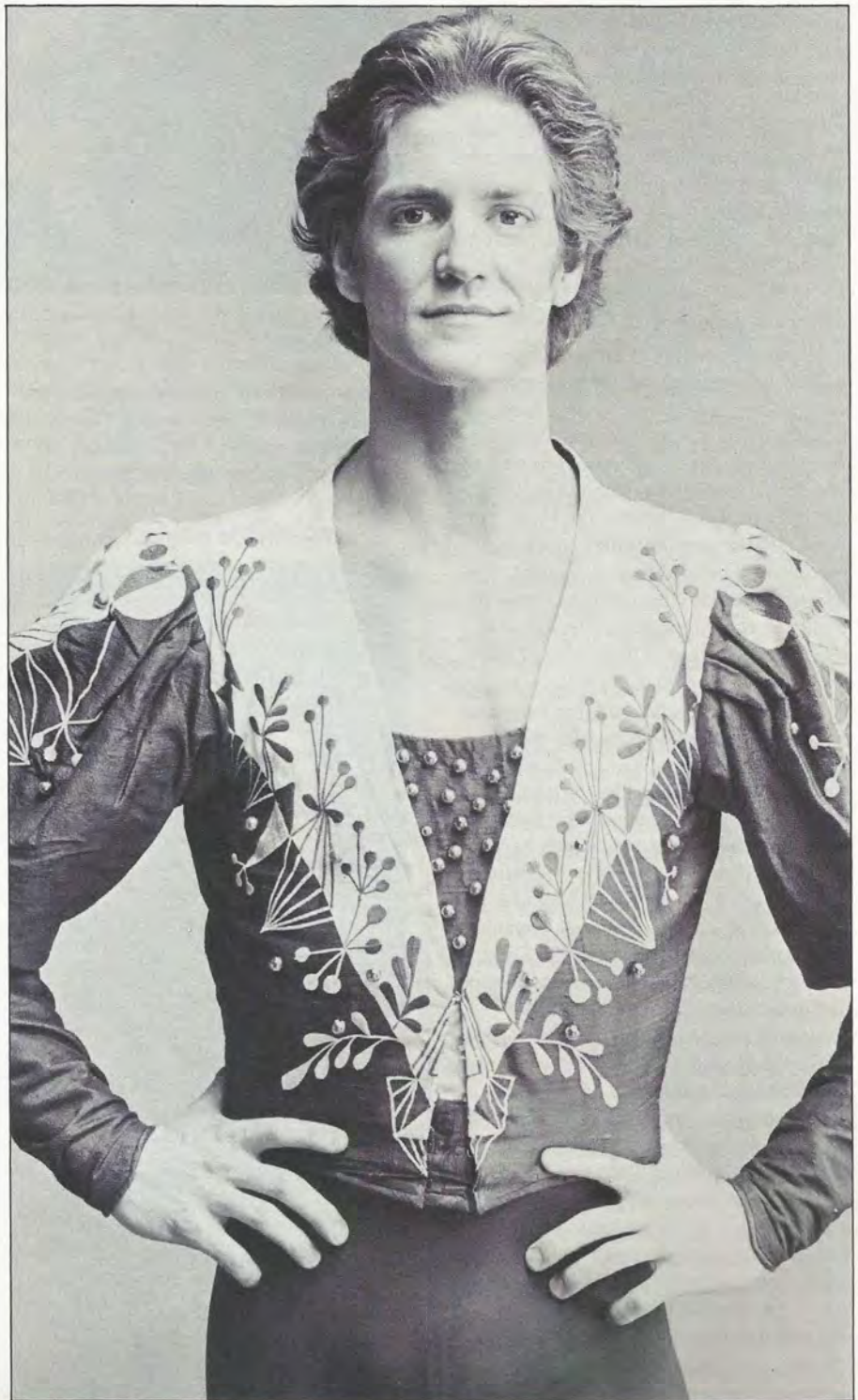
He says he's not concerned to be a star but 29-year-old National Ballet soloist Gregory Osborne is already a star in the eyes of his growing body of Canadian admirers. He only joined the National last August but Osborne has already established himself as one of the company's leading lights and brightest hopes. When the lean, blond-haired dancer is on stage you get the distinct impression the whole house could burn down and he'd still be out there doing his damndest to save the show.

Of course, it does no harm to have looks that kill. Osborne probably breaks more hearts in an average week than regular mortals can hope to touch in a lifetime. It's also an immeasurable advantage to have a precision-tooled technique. The Louisville native whips off steps with disarming spontaneity, making the mechanics of classical dance look like a thoroughly natural form of locomotion. Added to all this, Osborne has that magic quality called stage presence — a personality that radiates confidence and enthusiasm and allows you to relax and enjoy the dancing.

From the National Ballet's point of view, getting Osborne represents a major coup. Not so long ago the media was full of news about dancers "defecting" to American Ballet Theatre where, so it was implied, there were greater opportunities for personal development. Osborne chose the reverse route. He said goodbye to New York and ABT after almost a decade's sojourn in order to be part of the National. Theoretically he's just taken a leave-of-absence from ABT but he's quick to add that he plans to be around "for an extended period".

Osborne doesn't want to be too specific about his reasons for leaving the United States' premier classical repertory company. It helped to make him the dancer he is and there's clearly a strong loyalty to the company. At the same time, however, Osborne makes it plain he was not happy with the direction ABT has taken in recent years — a direction that has generated a great deal of controversy over Mikhail Baryshnikov's leadership. And then there was Erik Bruhn.

Last spring, not long before taking up his



Gregory Osborne in a studio portrait as the Nutcracker Prince.

new post as the National's artistic director, Bruhn was busily putting the finishing touches to a new production of *La Sylphide* for ABT. Osborne appeared in the two lead roles of James and Gurn. The experience of working with the great Danish-born dancer convinced Osborne he should come to Toronto. "Erik is so wonderful to work with. You know what he wants and he helps you achieve it".

Osborne freely admits that he misses New York — "I loved that city from the moment I stepped into it" — but he's already settled into an elegant condominium apartment right on Toronto's waterfront and says he likes his new home the more he gets to know it.

At work, the settling-in process has not been entirely smooth. Osborne is ambitious, not for status but for roles. So far, they've come more slowly than he'd like. But he's used the opportunities he's had to prove his value to the company. It cannot be long before the National honours a tacit agreement to promote Osborne to principal.

While Osborne excels in contemporary ballet where pure movement takes precedence over dramatic projection he is equally at home in the National's popular story ballets. There's not much any dancer can do with the role of Nutcracker Prince but last Christmas Osborne did his best to inject some personality into a cartoon-cutout character. Both as the Prince and as Master of Ceremonies, Osborne revealed an ability to possess the stage, dancing up a storm and infecting all those around him with some of his own exuberance.

In the fall he had taken almost everyone by surprise as he moved into the role of Basilio in the National's gaudy *Don Quixote* by dyeing his hair black! By the company's winter hometown season he was back to normal, looking almost indecently handsome and aristocratic as Prince Siegfried in Erik Bruhn's production of *Swan Lake*. Together with Gizella Witkowsky, making a spectacular debut as Odette/Odile, Osborne drew a roaring ovation from the near sellout audience gathered to see what the two young stars could achieve in one of ballet's most critical test situations. The two worked long and hard to develop a harmonious partnership, even travelling together to New York to work with leading teacher and coach David Howard. Their first performance encounter, by the lake in Act II, had a few unsteady moments but as the ballet progressed the couple sank deeper and deeper into their roles so that the concluding Act IV *pas de deux* became electric in its intensity and passion.

Offstage, Gregory Osborne is a cheery, unaffected individual with a natural sense of humour and boyish looks that belie a man



Gregory Osborne as Prince Siegfried, partnering Gizella Witkowsky in her National Ballet debut as Odette/Odile.

in his thirtieth year. He dresses stylishly but seemingly with effort to impress. People notice him in the street but, if Osborne is conscious of the attention, he shows no sign of it.

He's probably told the story of his toboggan accident in a hundred interviews but Osborne patiently rehearses the events which led him to his current career. He remembers the date when it happened, 23 December 1963, scarcely three weeks after his ninth birthday. Both legs were broken, just above the ankles, identical breaks. Osborne's mother, whom he fondly refers to as "a guiding light", had tap-danced as a child. She and the physiotherapist assigned to supervise Osborne's recovery decided dance classes might help. It was the thin end of the wedge. Greg's father, a Ford dealer with business ambitions for his younger son, was not too happy when what started as a therapy became a burning enthusiasm. It took a few years before he could accept Osborne's new interest. "Today", says Greg, "my father's almost a balletomane".

After classes in tap and jazz, ballet class at first seemed too structured and slow for Osborne. He liked quick results and found the discipline gruelling. But he endured. He studied at the prestigious North Carolina School of the Arts and, after the family's move away from Kentucky to California, took classes with a leading West Coast teacher, Lila Zali.

Greg's parents still insisted he have a college education. At age 16 he was still only 4 feet, 11 inches tall — hardly enough for a would-be ballet dancer. He attended and

graduated from Texas Christian University and took electives in economics, "just in case" as Osborne puts it, he should end up in the family business. He also kept up his dancing, appeared with the Fort Worth Civic Ballet and then went to New York to the School of American Ballet. That famous institution is most often thought of as an entry to New York City Ballet but the Fort Worth company had connections with ABT and it was that troupe's apprentice Ballet Repertory company that Osborne finally joined. Not for long, however. Within five months he'd moved to ABT itself, in 1975. Baryshnikov gave Osborne the dynamic Harlequin solo in his *Nutcracker* and choreographer Glen Tetley chose him for leading roles in *Sphinx*, *Gemini*, *Voluntaries* and *Pierrot Lunaire*. Much as Osborne enjoyed these contemporary ballets he also wanted to dance the touchstone classical roles and that, as much as anything else, has led him to Canada and the National Ballet where he can work on a daily basis with one of this century's greatest danseur nobles.

Bruhn is probably just the man to add the final polish to Gregory Osborne's flamboyant and occasionally over-energized dancing. He can give him the stage manner and natural dignity which makes the true classical dancer stand out among his colleagues. Osborne knows that if it doesn't happen now it never will and as he moves into what for a dancer are the prime years he's ready to grasp every opportunity and make it work for him. Being a star according to Osborne is one thing. Becoming a true artist is a whole other challenge.

# A New Force on the Calgary Dance Scene

## Denise Clarke and Anne Flynn

By Anne Georg

Being part of a young, exciting cultural community contains both blessings and pitfalls for those at its core. The Calgary partnership of Denise Clarke and Anne Flynn say they are cautious about becoming big fish in a small pond. As dancers, choreographers and university and studio instructors they enjoy the freedom of working with a minimum of the influence and competition found in larger centres, but must remind themselves of the larger pond and apply global standards to their work.

One side of local celebrity they vow to sidestep is the expectations of people in the dance community and of their audiences. "I know I'm influencing people", Clarke says. "I'm proud but leery; I don't want to be responsible for shaping Calgary's dance scene. I'd rather just work and not have anyone expect that of me".

But to balance that statement she says, "I'm grateful to be involved in a small scene that's so rich". She cites support and feedback that the small artistic community in Calgary provides.

Clarke and Flynn have immersed themselves in that community by including other artists in their productions and becoming involved in projects other than their own. In March of last year Clarke and puppeteer Ronnie Burkett collaborated in a concert entitled 'Together Again...For the First Time'. In *It Takes...One, Two*, Flynn danced to a lecture delivered by her philosophy professor Alison Wyley; the same concert featured the local rock band the Rip Chords. In July, 1983, Clarke acted in a local theatre troupe, One Yellow Rabbit's production *Juggler On a Drum* and both she and Flynn frequently improvise at Calgary's

alternative nightspot, Ten Foot Henry's, often accompanying poetry readings.

In their last performance, "Nice Works . . . If you Can Get It", December, 1983, Clarke and Flynn reached into the dance community to involve 12 independent dancers. By including the others they offered local dancers a chance to work together and an opportunity to try a different approach from that to which they are accustomed. And Clarke was able to expand her choreographic scope in what she describes as her "epic", *But Could We Be Heros?*, a dance influenced by New York choreographer Twyla Tharp's 1982 production *The Catherine Wheel*.

*Heros* begins with its 14 dancers lying on the stage chanting "evolution" with increasing volume and coherence. After experiments with balance they slowly evolve to mobility and face corruption in the form of a black-clad Rajac, the epitome of evil. Power struggles ensue among the dancers at Rajac's encouragement but in characteristic Clarke-style optimism the dancers evolve to find companionship, compassion and celebration among themselves.

Much of the choreography in the 45-minute dance is derived from pedestrian movement, such as running and climbing on ladders, up ropes, on swings, stairways and balustrades, the latter two being among the audience. Several sequences in *Heros* are improvised.

Some fans of Clarke's earlier work complain that the dance relies too heavily on improvisation and lacks structure and editing. Clarke acknowledges that her newest work is not as popular or as successful as earlier efforts but insists she cannot continue making the same dances simply to please audiences. She and Flynn agree that the freedom to work in the direction of choice, a direction that reflects the changes in their lives, is necessary even if not always successful.

That any movement can be used in working is a given for these choreographers, and both draw on their diverse backgrounds for source material. Flynn's training is predominantly modern while Clarke's is in classical and jazz. They have worked at developing broad movement repertoires as dancers driven by a curiosity about what it



Anne Flynn (left) and Denise Clarke in *Nice Works . . . If You Can Get It*.





*"The reality of dance is its truth to our inner life. Therein lies its power to move and communicate experience. The reality of dance can be brought into focus – that is into the realm of human values – by simple, direct, objective means."*

*– Martha Graham*



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feels like to move in different ways and an interest in movement as symbol.

Clarke says that by deriving movement from all dance/movement idioms she and Flynn free themselves from the limitations imposed by any one form because imposing limitations is something that these women are not interested in. They want to make dances that are relevant to human experience, and that means using movement which is meaningful in the context of any piece.

Frustrations with the limitations imposed by classical dancing led Clarke to jazz at age 19 after studying ballet since age three. During that time she studied with the Alberta Ballet Company and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. After a brief time in Montreal, with Les Ballet Jazz, Clarke discovered the joys of jazz dancing, became an avid social dancer and in 1979 went on to perform solo in Calgary. Three years ago Clarke teamed up with Flynn when she filled in for a dancer who suddenly dropped out of Flynn's student production. Shortly thereafter Clarke began teaching jazz and ballet at the university of Calgary. Now, at 26, she says jazz is her strength as a dancer although she does not consider herself just a jazz dancer.

Unlike Clarke, Flynn often danced socially during her youth in Brooklyn, but did not begin formal dance training until she was 19 years old, encouraged by a university instructor. She studied at the Brockport State University of New York and under Merce Cunningham and Erick Hawkins. Flynn, 28, professes to be a genuine product of university dance programs because she did most of her training there and is now completing a masters degree in movement at Wesleyan University while teaching modern dance at U of C.

Flynn spent her first years as an instructor in Calgary finding her own style of dance away from the influences of New York. She says that through teaching she learns as much about dance as do the students.

According to Clarke, Flynn has been instrumental in introducing a breath of fresh air to dance in Calgary. She is noted for her ability to relate dance to the lives of her students who are left with a desire to learn dance in all its forms, Clarke says.

Although Clarke and Flynn are leery of the responsibilities of their influence, according to U of C jazz instructor Vicki Adams Willis, collaborator in Clarke/Flynn productions, they have a definite influence on Calgary dancers. "Between them they teach many students and a lot of young dancers are in their audiences", she says.

With 12 faculty members the U of C is a focal point of Calgary's dance community

even though dance is offered only as a minor. According to Flynn if there is going to be a professional dance community in Calgary it will probably grow from the dance program there. The university has always been supportive of Clarke and Flynn, sponsoring their productions and encouraging their development as artist/teachers.

Their teaching salaries provide them with financial security and allow them freedom to produce their concerts, saved from the bitterness imposed by the "starving artist syndrome". Their comfort is reflected in their work. Flynn explains, "I feel fortunate; we can afford to be cheerful because we're not suffering in any way. Our dances are not a struggle and audiences respond to that".

Their non-professional status, however, has its drawbacks. Despite the amount of work they have done Clarke and Flynn are still relatively unknown outside Calgary. Their teaching schedules don't permit a lot of travel although last year they managed to perform at the Dance in Canada Conference in Saskatoon, the Edmonton Dance Extravaganza, The Women in the Arts Festival in Edmonton and for the Canadian Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation in Toronto.

This year Flynn is off on a six-month

sabbatical while Clarke continues to line up performances for herself, one to be staged in Victoria this spring in collaboration with two dancers, Linda Raino and Constantine Darling with composer Ernie Manera.

The Clarke/Flynn partnership is built on mutual respect and compatibility. Come production time there are not conscious decisions of the role either will play. "We always manage to settle into our roles without ever discussing it", says Clarke. The quality of the Clarke/Flynn productions proves the success of this formula.

Their work is influenced by one another's interests such as Flynn's philosophy studies and Clarke's fascination with vernacular movement. While they must accept the limitations Calgary imposes, such as a lack of knowledgeable dance criticism and the shortage of male dancers, at the same time they enjoy their city and do not acknowledge fears of provincialism. According to Willis it is partially because of Calgary's isolation and lack of outside influence that Clarke and Flynn have found their unique and fresh style of dance.

Their popularity among students, dancers, and dance appreciators in Calgary is a positive reflection of the kind of work these women choose to do.



Clarke (left) and Flynn in *Nice Works* . . .



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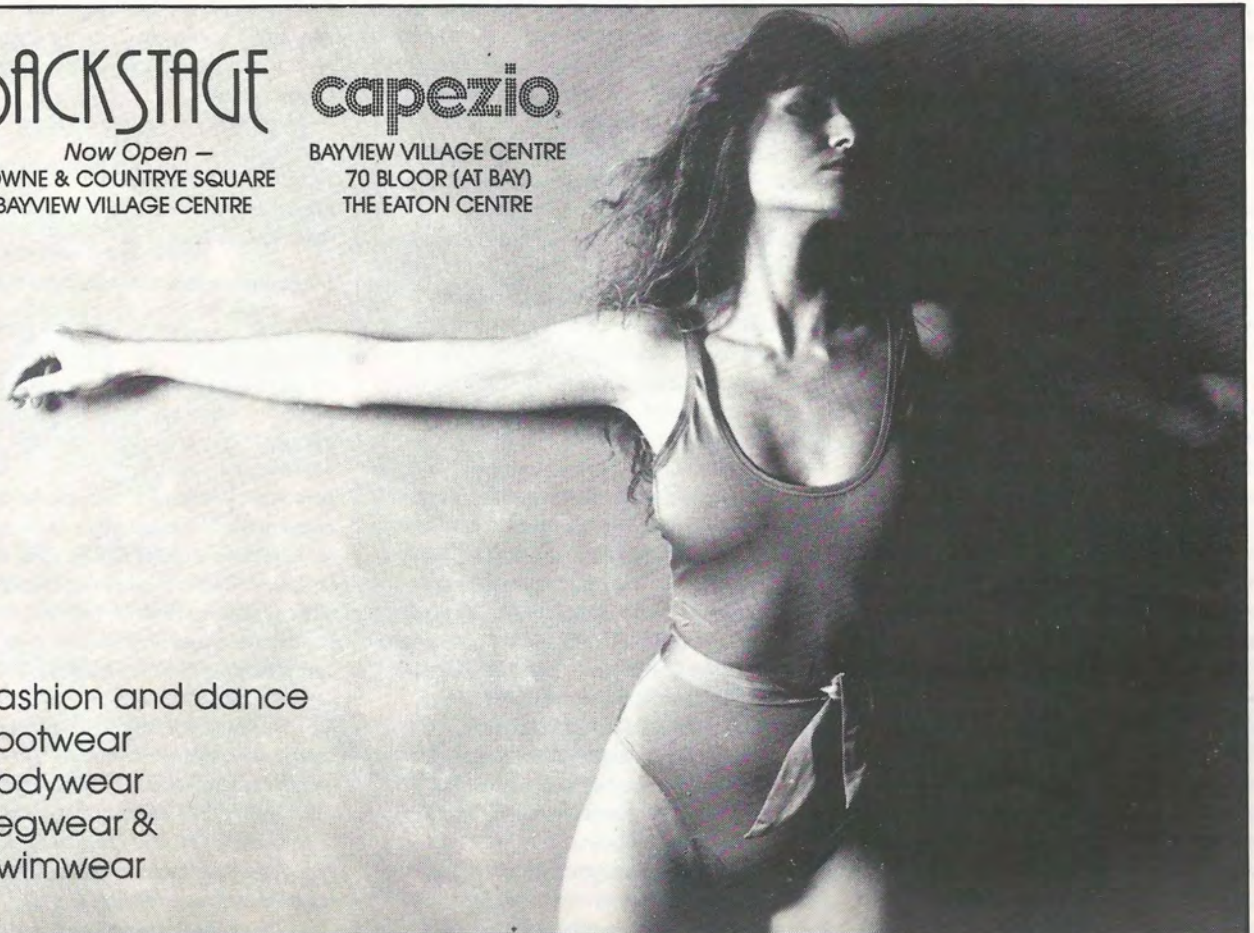
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# Enseigner avec souplesse:

## Ou l'art de s'adapter à sa classe

par Madeleine Lord

Un nombre impressionnant de classes de danse sont données chaque jour à travers le pays dans des contextes aussi variés que l'école publique (primaire et secondaire), le studio ou l'école privée, le centre de loisirs, le centre de conditionnement physique ou l'institution de formation professionnelle. Considérant la vocation fort différente de chacun de ces types d'établissement, la grande diversité de leur clientèle respective, la nature de la danse et son riche éventail d'expériences d'apprentissage, il est étonnant de constater que relativement peu de différences fondamentales existent dans le contenu et le style d'enseignement de toutes ces classes.

### *Rigidité de l'enseignement*

A peu d'exceptions près, il s'agit de classes "techniques" se déroulant selon le schéma suivant: un travail à la barre ou au sol, un centre, des diagonales et un enchaînement chorégraphique. La reproduction par les élèves de mouvements aussi fidèles que possibles aux canons esthétiques de la forme de danse en cause est le but majeur recherché, ce qui suscite un enseignement directif où le participant est souvent oublié au profit de la technique.

La trop fréquente apparition de cette leçon type nous porte à croire que la nature même de la danse aussi bien que le modèle d'enseignement professionnel sont souvent mal compris et que ce dernier est appliqué sans discernement dans les autres secteurs. On y oublie que l'enseignement doit alors être assujéti à des préoccupations dictées par la fonction propre de chaque type d'établissements, soit procurer le plaisir de danser (récréation), faciliter l'expression créatrice (éducation) ou améliorer la condition physique des participants (promotion de la santé).

Si aucun autre secteur que celui de la formation professionnelle n'est soumis aux exigences de la scène, pourquoi attacher tant d'importance à la technique dans les autres secteurs? Pourquoi ne présenter la danse que dans la rigueur de l'entraînement professionnel? Pourquoi ne pas davantage exploiter toutes les formes de travail possibles — apprentissage technique, apprentissage d'enchaînements,

improvisation libre et structurée, composition, interprétation et appréciation — pour adapter le contenu et le style de l'enseignement à la vocation particulière de l'établissement où il est dispensé?

Chaque forme de travail en danse porte sur des apprentissages distincts contribuant à leur façon au développement de la capacité d'expression en mouvement, et implique le recours à des stratégies d'enseignement particulières. Un choix judicieux d'expériences en danse doublées d'un style d'enseignement adapté aux apprentissages en cause et à la vocation de l'établissement représentent de meilleurs gages de qualité d'enseignement qu'une copie maladroite de l'enseignement professionnel.

Par cet article l'auteur désire mettre en évidence quelques caractéristiques essentielles de contenus et de stratégies d'enseignement qu'elle considère appropriées aux milieux récréatifs, éducatifs et de promotion de la santé.

### *Danser pour le plaisir*

La récréation est souvent considérée comme une saine utilisation du loisir lequel trouve son sens dans le plaisir et la joie de l'action. Pour servir une fonction récréative, une activité doit procurer un plaisir immédiat au participant ce qui engendre généralement un sentiment de satisfaction et de réalisation de soi.

Dans cet ordre d'idée, on peut dire qu'amener les gens à expérimenter le plaisir de danser dans la forme de leur choix représente un ingrédient essentiel de l'enseignement de la danse dans les services de loisirs municipaux, les centres de loisirs ou certaines classes de studios ou écoles privées. Les participants ne cherchent pas à atteindre une parfaite maîtrise du vocabulaire technique. Ils ont certes le goût d'apprendre à se mouvoir avec aisance et efficacité, mais plus encore, c'est l'envie de danser qui les a amené à s'inscrire, et c'est dans ce but qu'ils sont venus à la danse.

Leur procurer ce plaisir constitue la mission de l'enseignant en milieu de loisirs. Diverses stratégies peuvent faciliter l'atteinte de ce but. Ainsi, l'interprétation de danses de contenu et de styles variés adaptée aux capacités des participants est inhérente à

l'idée de procurer le plaisir de danser.

Toutefois, s'adonner à l'interprétation avec un plaisir renouvelé suppose l'acquisition parallèle d'une facilité d'exécution de niveau croissant et une compréhension progressivement plus profonde de l'art de la danse.

Un programme de danse récréative a donc avantage à aborder plusieurs formes de travail tout en privilégiant l'interprétation de façon particulière.

Le climat d'une classe de danse récréative exprimera le plaisir, la bonne humeur et la cordialité. Tout en créant un tel climat de travail, le professeur en milieu récréatif aura entre autre avantage à:

- favoriser un maximum de temps d'engagement moteur pour les participants
- valoriser une bonne maîtrise technique sans en faire une fin
- valoriser le progrès personnel
- fournir beaucoup d'encouragements
- guider adéquatement le déroulement de chaque activité
- favoriser les échanges entre les participants
- respecter leurs goûts musicaux et kinesthésiques tout en les exposant à du matériel nouveau et de qualité.

### *L'enseignement à vocation éducative*

Que ce soit dans le cadre des programmes d'éducation physique ou artistique, la danse est de plus en plus présente à l'école publique. Elle y est cependant dans une optique bien particulière, soit celle de contribuer au plein épanouissement de la personne. Véritable force unificatrice de la personnalité, la danse est la seule discipline scolaire qui permette l'intégration de la pensée, de l'affectivité et de la motricité dans une expression créatrice individuelle. Cette contribution fondamentale unique, qui se complète de plusieurs autres qui lui sont sous-jacentes (prise de conscience et affirmation de soi, stimulation du potentiel créatif, développement social, compréhension de sa culture et de celle d'autres nations), constitue la raison d'être de la danse à l'école. L'enseignement y est approprié dans la mesure où il facilite la réalisation de cette finalité.

L'atteinte de l'expression créatrice n'est

pas automatique. Elle suppose le développement d'une capacité d'expression artistique authentique, laquelle requiert l'acquisition de connaissances et d'habiletés de mouvement comme moyen d'expression, de même que de fréquentes occasions de s'adonner à la création de danses personnelles. Dans cette orientation, la danse à l'école est approchée comme un art de création. C'est ce qui lui vaut souvent l'appellation de "danse créative".

Un programme de danse scolaire comporte habituellement un ensemble intégré d'expériences suscitant tout à la fois le développement de la maîtrise corporelle, la capacité d'inventer et de varier des mouvements et de l'habileté à improviser, composer, interpréter et apprécier le mouvement dansé. Il va sans dire que dans le cadre d'un programme aussi vaste, le niveau de maîtrise technique de l'élève est d'importance secondaire. Ce qui importe, c'est de faire vivre la démarche de création et de fournir aux élèves des moyens de s'y adonner avec un plaisir renouvelé.

La danse à l'école ne consiste pas à faire apprendre des danses toutes faites mais plutôt de permettre aux jeunes de créer leurs propres danses. On ne vise pas non plus à l'apprentissage d'un vocabulaire technique existant mais plutôt au développement, par chaque élève, de son propre vocabulaire de mouvement. L'acquisition de facilités à se mouvoir efficacement et à manipuler les composantes du mouvement pour créer et varier des mouvements à l'infini lui permettront d'atteindre ce but.

La création et l'interprétation de danses reflétant la personnalité propre des élèves constituent les activités où se joue la fonction éducative. C'est là, en effet, que se manifeste l'expression artistique authentique. La composition et l'interprétation tiennent donc des places privilégiées dans un programme de danse scolaire. Ces formes de travail prendront sens dans la mesure où les élèves vivront parallèlement des expériences leur permettant de développer leurs capacités d'interprètes et de créateurs.

Des formes de travail susceptibles d'apporter des contributions à cet égard sont l'apprentissage de fondements techniques et d'enchaînements de même que l'improvisation structurée et libre. A ceci s'ajoute enfin l'appréciation des danses de ses pairs et parfois aussi de celles d'artistes professionnels contemporains ou passés. C'est en verbalisant ses réactions à différentes oeuvres que l'enfant développe ses capacités d'appréciateur et approfondit sa compréhension de l'art de la danse.

L'atmosphère d'une classe de danse éducative reflétera le respect mutuel entre étudiants et enseignant, la structure et la

concentration sur les activités proposées. Plusieurs types de stratégies pédagogiques peuvent contribuer à la création de conditions d'apprentissage cohérentes avec une démarche éducative. Les classes excédant souvent 25 étudiants nécessitent une organisation du travail qui est aussi importante que la nature des tâches proposées. Des stratégies particulièrement importantes dans ce secteur seront celles qui, entre autres:

- suscitent rapidement des comportements d'écoute à des moments critiques de la classe
- favorisent un maximum de temps d'engagement moteur pour les élèves
- assurent une organisation et un déroulement efficace du travail
- valorisent le progrès personnel
- valorisent la créativité et l'authenticité
- valorisent la compréhension des apprentissages en cause
- respectent les goûts musicaux et kinesthésiques des participants tout en les exposant à du matériel nouveau et de qualité
- assurent un climat de travail positif.

#### **La promotion de la santé et du bien-être physique**

Lorsqu'elle fait appel à l'enchaînement d'actions ou de mouvement sollicitant généreusement les plans musculaire et organique, la danse se révèle un excellent moyen de mise en forme physique. Nombreux sont les établissements de conditionnement physique et autres types d'établissement qui offrent des programmes de danse dans ce but. Kinorythmie, dancexercice, danse aérobique etc...voilà autant de tentatives d'utilisation de la danse comme activité à dominante aérobique. Le plaisir renouvelé d'exécuter et de répéter des mouvements dansés variés issus du vocabulaire naturel de l'humain se révèle une excellente motivation à persévérer dans l'effort tout en offrant au participant l'occasion de s'exprimer dans une foule de styles de mouvement. Encore faut-il, cependant, qu'il soit réellement question de danse. Les classes de danse en aérobique ne suivent habituellement pas le schéma type présenté au début de cet article. Les problèmes de ce secteur sont d'avantages reliés au fait qu'on y parle abondamment de danse sans même y présenter de "mouvement dansé".

Les professionnels de la danse ont des réactions souvent ambiguës face à ce secteur. On constate une tendance à le considérer comme un parent pauvre. C'est pourtant un secteur par le biais duquel une part importante de la population peut être appelée à faire ses premiers pas de danse. Il offre d'autre part actuellement beaucoup d'emplois, lesquels sont souvent

monopolisés par des personnes peu en mesure d'offrir des expériences satisfaisantes à la fois sur le plan de l'expression du mouvement et du développement organique.

La capacité de créer et de proposer des enchaînements suscitant un réel travail en aérobique — enchaînements qui soient originaux, dansants et faciles à exécuter et à mémoriser — est un gage de succès dans ce secteur. Cela suppose la connaissance de principes de conditionnement physique, une grande habileté à créer des danses à la portée de tous et la maîtrise de capacités d'intervention favorisant un déroulement efficace des séances. Bien qu'il soit difficile de parler d'expression artistique en danse aérobique, on peut parler d'expression spontanée dans l'interprétation de danses à caractères variés d'inspiration "boogie woogie", folklorique, rock, médiévale ou autre. La compétence du professionnel de la danse est très importante dans ce secteur et est susceptible d'y être un gage efficace de promotion de la danse dans notre société.

L'interprétation de danses de styles variés sollicitant la capacité aérobique à divers degrés d'intensité constitue le coeur d'un programme de danse en aérobique. A ces activités de base peuvent se joindre d'autres formes de travail n'appartenant pas nécessairement à la danse.

L'exploitation maximale du temps disponible pour susciter un bon travail organique et musculaire représente un facteur clef d'efficacité auquel s'ajoute le divertissement.

La création d'une ambiance de plaisir et de cordialité représentent donc des facteurs non négligeables. Des stratégies déjà identifiées en milieu récréatif s'appliquent tout aussi bien aux classes de danse en aérobique. Des stratégies plus spécifiques seront celles qui entre autres:

- permettent de réduire l'investissement de temps consacré à l'apprentissage des danses
- stimulent et encouragent la poursuite de l'effort
- valorisent l'expression authentique et l'engagement total dans l'activité.

Il n'y a pas en soi de bon ou de mauvais enseignement. Tout est fonction des buts poursuivis. L'enseignement de qualité est celui qui permet de les atteindre le plus efficacement possible. Cet article a tenté d'illustrer comment le contenu et le style de l'intervention pédagogique en danse peuvent être modifiés pour mieux servir les causes spécifiques de trois importants secteurs d'intervention. Les professeurs ont tout avantage à user leurs compétences et leur créativité pour adapter leur enseignement dont la qualité ne pourra que mieux s'en porter.



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## In Review

**National Ballet of Canada**  
O'Keefe Centre  
Toronto  
November 1983 and  
February 1984

Yes, the National Ballet is successfully making the transition from mother Grant to father Bruhn. All signs indicate that the dancers welcome the challenge; but this is the honeymoon period and the results cannot really be judged for another year or two. Bruhn's aim, while retaining the company's classical base, is to expand the repertoire by exposing his dancers and his audiences to new influences. Modern dance is one of them. With any luck this openness will encourage creativity and reveal, at long last, a distinctive National Ballet style.

This may already lie in the company itself, in the future works of Constantin Patsalas. In November he presented his newest ballet, *L'île inconnue*, a lush, romantic piece to Hector Berlioz' equally lush *Les nuits d'été*. With it the National has a real treasure, possibly Patsalas's first masterpiece. It reveals a previously undetected romanticism to which the dancers, especially the younger ones, respond openly and fluently. One was so captivated by their fresh-petalled youthfulness, one fell in love. And that kind of subjectivity is not a normal reaction to the National. Responsibility maybe — something United Church and civic — but love never.

One hopes to see *L'île inconnue* again, especially if Patsalas agrees to print Gauthier's poems in the program, as one hopes to reacquaint oneself with *Here We Come*. This modest piece to some umpity-tum by Morton Gould, dressed in unfortunate sailor suits, presents 12 of the men as the company never has before: proud, authoritative, and witty. Some people, expecting lots of high-flying tricks, were disap-

pointed by Bruhn's restraint, which misunderstands Bruhn, of course, and overlooks the advantages of *Here We Come* as a program opener.

The National's men are stronger than at any time in the company's history, thanks largely to Grant's keen eye and encouragement. The women, on the other hand, have been hanging in for some time, thanks largely to the company's inability to identify another ballerina. There are several aspirants — Gizella Witkowsky and Sabina Allemann come to mind — but it's Yoko Ichino who's being fed royal jelly these days. During the winter season she made her debut as Lise in *La Fille Mal Gardée*; later she tackled the ballerina role in *Etudes*. Here her speed and confidence were remarkable, though she did not have quite enough romantic allure for the shadow dances or the pas de deux. Yet she galvanized her colleagues, (though not David Roxander who performed like a flapping fish), in a way only ballerinas can. Generalship of the Veronica Tennant type she seems to have got. Martine Lamy, a youngster in the corps de ballet also having her first crack at the role, was more successful in its adagio passages. The question about Ichino is: can she dance the classical repertoire? Until one sees her *Giselle* and *Odette/Odile*, the fight for royal jelly will continue.

Meanwhile audiences can enjoy the new ballets. That they have not all been successful goes without saying, for making ballets is a risky business. From the winter season, *Components*, by John McFall, seems to have brought audiences the most pleasure, Danny Grossman's *Endangered Species* the least.

*Components* has an attractive score, *Shaker Loops*, in the minimalist manner by John Adams, and a series of shiny, silvery drops by Rouben Ter-Arutunian. These move up and

down, but two viewings were not quite enough to explain why. Nor were they enough to pick up much about McFall's choreography, or Shakers for that matter. It's the kind of stuff that one might call neo-Balanchine; but with the real stuff, *Serenade*, on the program, one is inclined to rudeness. Nonetheless, one must admit that McFall's adagio movement — attitudes, arabesques: stretchy stuff mostly — shows off the dancers wonderfully, but it's choreography the National can perform in its sleep.

More challenging was *Endangered Species*, made by Grossman for his own company in 1981, and inspired by Goya's *Disasters of War*, as well as by the expressionist paintings of Kathë Kallwitz and George Grosz. It's a short, abrasive

work, much admired by Grossman's modern dance audience. It's appearance in the National's mixed winter program was to test the company's ability to handle modern dance. Could the company hold its weight to the floor? The opening runs suggested two answers; some dancers could, while others kept lifting their knees. Would a national audience accept Krsysztof Penderecki's *Threnody — to the victims of Hiroshima*, orchestrated for strings, sirens, and bomb sound effects? These and other questions are still unanswered. Firstnighters were muted in their response, though at a later performance a few "bravos" were heard. The dancers, in Mary Kerr's rags, worked hard — David Nixon, Yolande Auger, Barbara Smith, and Mark Raab particularly so.



Barbara Smith and Owen Montague in Constantin Patsalas's new ballet, *L'île inconnue*.

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But, let it be understood, the problems with *Endangered Species* are not wholly with the audience and the dancers. Despite its reputation, it is, for such a short work, surprisingly repetitive, and there is nothing quite like the width of the O'Keefe for revealing boredom in repetition. An audience will instinctively ask, "so what?". It may be that the work will look better after a run of performances, or on a smaller stage. Certainly it is not proof that the National has come to grips with modern dance.

*Serenade*, the first item on the program, was not a happy revival. Joysanne Sidimus, who supervised its staging, has allowed Balanchine's early American work *Serenade* to become "dramatic", Veronica Tennant, for example, dances the ballet as a gloss on Giselle and on the vision scene in *The Sleeping Beauty*. Balanchine certainly did not intend this. He was more interested in Tchaikovsky's music. But the National has always danced Balanchine as if his ballets had stories, and this is an understandable mistake given the extent of story ballets in its repertoire. Most of the women lack the speed one is accustomed to see from the Balanchine-founded New York City Ballet. Several of them look fat. One wonders what will happen to *Symphony in C* when it enters the rep next season!

Probably a history of performances like *Etudes*. When it was first mounted a few years ago, there were performances where one sweated with every step. One prayed the dancers would not fall down or disgrace themselves . . . O Apollo, please help them get through this, and I promise to take Brian Macdonald more seriously . . . That is no longer necessary. While the National does not exactly toss it off, the company dances with assurance and confidence. One left the O'Keefe happy and stimulated about the future.

LAWRENCE HASKETT

**Nova Dance Theatre**  
James Dunn Theatre  
Dalhousie Arts Centre  
Halifax  
26-28 January, 1984

Discerning direction and development from Nova Dance Theatre's three-year history is a difficult task. Difficult too is finding a point of view in a repertoire characterized by immense variety in subject matter and style. Artistic director Jeanne Robinson is no help here either as the body of her work contains themes from the cosmic to the comic, and is wrought from elements as diverse as mime, minimalism, jazz and punk. The beautiful memory of last year's winter show, where a delicate balance between diversity and consistency was achieved, served only to underscore the fact that this year's January concert offered few connecting threads. With powerful works already in its repertoire, Nova Dance Theatre must wrestle the beast of unpredictable quality to the ground.

Part of the problem may lie in presenting all new works each season — a risky business. Why not include one or two works of proven quality? Other companies do, and their audiences enjoy them as old friends. Another advantage to reviving dances is in giving choreographers a chance to refine their work. Robinson's *Dance For Changing Parts*, for example, has extraordinary potential. It could be a masterpiece with more attention.

Poor production values is another challenge facing the company. In the present concert, Ian Pygott's lighting tended to turn the Dunn Theatre's black stage area into an endless dark space — a bleak environment into which some of the life of the dances drained.

Costumer Sheilagh Hunt dressed the "Folk Dance and Jig" segment of Francine Boucher's *Réverie* in black leotards and tights. On the dancers' heads she put black skull caps with what looked like a few bent pipe-cleaners sticking out of them. Not my idea of folksy.



Louise Hoyt and Cliff LeJeune in Jeanne Robinson's *Moving Right Along*.

The funereal lighting and costumes made it difficult to apprehend that the folk dance was in fact full-bodied and rousing. In Boucher's *Entusiasmo*, ("A high-speed carnival of colour, form, rhythm and joy", says the program), the dancers again wore black, but this time a few turquoise and magenta ribbons were sewn on. Not my idea of festive.

A regular contributor to Nova Dance Theatre, Boucher has a knack for light, humorous content, and simple, solid structures. Her choreography and characterizations, however, tend to be thin and need much more detail to flesh them out. I've seen four of her dances, and in each one of them I caught myself wondering if there was no other purpose to some of the movements than to "fill-up" time until the score ran out.

*Réverie* intends to portray

dream sequences, but its seven segments appear as underdeveloped and unrelated images. Among the characters who appear in the first section are a football player, tap dancer and green worm. The audience finds them cute, but I'd rather they were clever and their steps, tasks and gestures more resonant and less repetitive. The audience laughs and seems to find the piece pleasant. If this is Boucher's goal, she has achieved it.

Her *Entusiasmo* suffers from additional problems. Two improperly clad people on a bare stage would be hard-pressed to evoke a carnival anywhere; and the non-stop, "high-speed" percussive score requires the extraordinary stamina and athletic exuberance of a company like Les Ballets Africains. What we have is choreography which is too slow and

balletic, and bears little relationship to the music or the idea of Mardi Gras. Still, Louise Hoyt's belly-slide down Cliff LeJeune's back was lovely, and it wasn't the only nice moment.

Awesomely artful and imaginative, and masterfully crafted, was the premiere of *House Pets* by guest choreographer Jennifer Mascall. The piece digs at your unconscious to unearth childhood memories of innocence and pain. Five dancers flow through complex floor patterns in a variety of combinations. Densely layered with rich images, *House Pets* requires more than one viewing to absorb. Those familiar with Mascall's work would recognize the nightmare quality of this piece with its eerie pools of light, and anguish seething with violence. The dance ends with the performers alone and trembling. As they stretch their hands out to us, we hear the words from an old rock and roll song, "Tell me that you love me too". Mascall's characters strike me as unloved and unloveable. Richard Robertson's score of old rock and roll cuts, voices and electronic howls is a perfect partner for this dance.

*Moving Right Along*, by Artistic Director Jeanne Robinson, is a rambling 30-minute piece in

need of focus. I think its intention is to satirize the sado-masochistic fads of the punk/heavy-metal generation, but it hints at this weakly. A lot of time is spent watching the backs of the dancers as they change into costumes like black leather pants, spiked heels and fish net stockings. Anyway, how does one caricature a world already so bizarre? Only Robinson, with her well-honed theatrical presence, manages to mimic the grotesque facial expressions of the heavy-metal band Kiss, for instance, and make us laugh at the same time. There's a lot of couple dancing too. Cliff LeJeune wraps his neck-tie around his partner's throat as if to strangle her. *Moving Right Along* looks like a watered down *Rocky Horror Picture Show* and inadvertently becomes what it intends to ridicule.

A new addition to the company is Cliff LeJeune. His dancing is alright, but his pantomime and acting sizzles.

Attendance was up one third over last year's — audience-wise, a great leap forward for Nova Dance Theatre.

ALICE FROST

**Bremen Dance Theatre**  
Ryerson Theatre  
Toronto  
13-17 December, 1983.

At the moment when Maria Callas first embraced herself as a great star, she began her tragic descent to an early death. Callas the artist became confused in her mind with Callas the legend and with this confusion, the abiding night star of her glorious Muse became the meteor of her international fame. It is this Callas, victim of the diva-worshipping world of Grand Opera that Reinhold Hoffmann exposes in her two-and-a-half-hour spectacle for the Bremen Dance Theatre. Exposes and mourns. Hoffmann's fadeout image of a chair-bound Callas staring yearningly at an empty swing arcing above and beyond her is distinctly sorrowful: here is the end — no hope.

To get us to this point, Hoffmann arranges a series of close, even claustrophobic, chamber-like scenes that play variations on the destruction-of-the-goddess theme. All of the scenes are enacted on a stage within the stage to the strains of famous Callas arias. Hoffmann shows us Callas competing with rude latecomers to the opera; Callas tricked into donning the

red shoes of affected as opposed to real passion; Callas implicated in a brutal battle between masculine and feminine personae; Callas as Madama Butterfly, as La Fanciulla del West, as Tosca, Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra, Norma, Violetta, Carmen; Callas as costume "cut-outs" of her roles; Callas mythologized and marketed; Callas beautified; Callas abused by her adoring public. Sometimes Hoffmann has Callas played by one dancer, at others by two or three; most of the time Callas becomes a concept interpreted by the full company. Both men and women impersonate her. The image of long-legged men wearing net stockings and black women's undergarments as they manipulate costumes representative of Callas' repertoire mounted on silver reflective board suggests the "contribution" of the homosexual aesthetic to the prima's mythological status.

Visually powerful and intellectually lucid as many of these scenes are, almost all of them reveal the same weakness; the images they offer don't grow. Like the debris — the paper, the fabric, the balloons — that gradually litters the stage, Hoffmann's images simply accumulate. She does not explore their

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possible reverberations. (One exception comes forcibly to mind: the image of a formal dinner table, created by a long white sheet of cloth tied apron-style around the waists of a dozen dancers, metamorphosing into a white-carpeted nave up which Callas as the veiled virgin bride proceeds to her sacrifice.) What Hoffmann does is exploit an image and its allied idea long past its ability to speak eloquently to us. Her imagistic technique seems often to border on minimalism. Perhaps if she had been true to North American minimalist strategies, we might have been less discomfited by the result, but her use of minimalist techniques, particularly in movement, is overwhelmed by her taste for extravagant theatricality, part of the European tradition generally and German Neo-Expressionism specifically. This coupling leaves us exactly nowhere or rather leaves us questioning Hoffmann's ability to create resonant imagery.

Somewhere in my first experience of this curious marriage of styles, I wondered if the depotentiating effects minimalism and theatricalism were having on one another were not deliberate, a way of emphasizing the impossibility of Callas' own dual role of artist and star. In the end, however, I decided that Hoffmann had copped out; she had shown herself reluctant to commit herself fully to the corruscating denunciation of stardom and star-worshipping that she had undertaken and, instead of revealing something of her deepest feelings about Callas, had settled for shocking and alienating her audience. Once, as I said, she pulled an image out of her bag of tricks

that resonated deeply for me, but once is not sufficiently sustaining — a spark is not a fire.

Perhaps more noteworthy than *Callas* as a work of art was *Callas* as a target for public outrage — at least in Toronto. In Ottawa and Montreal, the audience reception of the piece was mild and enthusiastic respectively. Here it managed to bring out the very worst in audiences, which is to say very, very bad indeed.

Of course the usual bravos were tossed to the company and its director by the two or three hundred people who stuck it out to the end in the 1,200-seat Ryerson Theatre, but even positive response on this occasion was suspect. As taunts to the several hundred people who had left, many of these bravos were meant to testify to the cultural superiority of the bravoers. A large homosexual contingent, prominent among the vocally supportive, seemed to be saying it was willing to worship Hoffmann as it had Callas. And our air-tight dance community, fascinated by other and radically different signs of life, happily lent their lungs and palms to the celebration; the feeling of solidarity between the dancers onstage and in the audience played a part, too, in the latter's response.

Mostly, however, reaction to *Callas* was negative, not to say hostile. On top of the relentless exits (some, many of them deliberately noisy), gigglings, cluckings, mutterings, rustlings, even pacings created an atmosphere thick with tension. Granted some of what Hoffmann showed us was difficult to watch. "The Taming" section, for instance, featured

evening-clothed men and women taking turns domesticating their partners with bullwhips and "The Fat Singer" showed several men physically humiliating a frowsy and drunken opera diva by padding her leotard with party balloons and then abandoning her in a heap in the middle of the stage as one might a broken and useless playtoy, to be swept up with garbage. (This little vignette reminded me of a nauseating chapter in Hubert Selby's generally sickening *Last Exit to Brooklyn* in which a young woman is even more horribly disfigured and cast-off by a band of young men who once desired her.) The despair one experiences when confronted with such graphically hopeless portraits of human behaviour might well justify departure — I remember walking out of Fassbinder's *Veronika Voss* for this reason — but most of the objections to these scenes got stuck in the thwarted-expectation gear. For me this was best symbolized by the outraged and noisy feminist across the aisle who kept referring to Hoffmann with indignation as "he". Her ignorance of who Reinhold Hoffmann was, tied to a mindset that probably limited all experience to a question of sexual-politics produced the kind of closed-mindedness (albeit somewhat more sophisticated) that distinguishes Toronto audiences at the best of times.

An audience unwilling to educate itself, an audience content, smug even, with the little it knows, an audience that wishes to avoid adventure, an audience that does not respect the rights of others to take the risks it will not, an audience in short that has all its expectations firmly in

place and does not intend to have them jostled an inch — this is the larger Toronto dance audience. A subscription-hearted audience that sees culture in terms of a three-hour (maybe four counting transportation time) bi-monthly investment. This kind of audience should never, of course, stray outside the range of a *Fille Mal Gardée* or, to be generous, a *Tommy*. Why is it so? Too much prosperity, too much comfort, too little incentive to expand its horizons. Two expatriate Canadian acquaintances in town at different times over the last year shook their heads in wonderment at the "new" Toronto. "La dolce vita has arrived in Toronto", one said and then tapping his temple appended, "Mindless". He might just as well have said, "Soulless".

The only positive element in the whole disheartening experience called *Callas* was producers Mark Hammond's and Uriel Luft's willingness to bring Hoffmann and her company here in the first place. I hope his subscriber reaction doesn't sour him to the point of abandoning the "Dance"! series altogether or, alternatively, push him to fill it with endless ballet-jazz style companies. Bravo to Hammond and Luft!

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**Brian Webb Dance Company**  
Grant MacEwan Community  
College  
Edmonton  
17-18 November, 1983.

Experience is said to be the best teacher. The truth of this adage was borne out all too well by the latest performance of the Brian Webb Dance Company, where by far the best pieces on the program were those choreographed by Webb himself and by a long-standing member of the group, Andrea Rabinovitch.

The opening piece, Webb's *Apollo*, was visually well integrated, with Cherie Moses' simple, pillar-like hangings achieving a pleasing Greek effect which fitted well with the stark white costumes. Webb in the role of Apollo made a convincing god but the muses, apart from Debra Shantz as Calliope, were lacking in any distinctive character. Shantz, however, came through as a rather sensuous muse of poetry — a characterization which seemed at odds with the theme of meditation.

While credit should be given to Webb for giving some obviously inexperienced dancers an opportunity to perform as a group in *Apollo*, the lack of coordination and technique was an unfortunate contrast to the strength and technical competence of the company members. Much of the time, the beginner group looked very much under-rehearsed, and having them alone on stage for the final moments of the work made for a very weak ending.

Overall, however, *Apollo* was one of Webb's more successful innovations. Its greatest failing was not in the choreography or in the execution but in the lack of harmony between the music and all the other elements of the performance. Stravinsky's jagged dissonances, far from setting a mood of meditation, did quite the opposite and fitted poorly with the underlying concept of the dance.

In *Oregon Coast*, choreographed by another company member, Barbara Bonner, many of the movements were angular,



Brian Webb, Andrea Rabinovitch and Barbara Bonner in *The Carp Pool*.

abrupt, and sometimes awkward. The overall effect seemed to have little to do with the theme of underwater life, and the dance as a whole, based as it was on contact improvisation, tended to turn into a series of callisthenics whose connections to each other and to the theme were hard to detect. Here again, the music was an irritant, consisting of lengthy repetitions of the sound of ocean waves, punctuated by electronic seagull squawks.

Debra Shantz' *Song of Home*, despite the very pretentious program notes on the "path...towards self-reformation" communicated very little, with most of the company standing repeating the same arm movements for several minutes while Shantz herself walked in circles apart from the group.

These last two pieces, along with Webb's *The Carp Pool*, left one with the disconcerting feeling that titles, music, program notes, and all the elements of the dances themselves could have been mixed and matched in almost any combination and have had more or less the same impact.

After three slow, obscure pieces, it was a relief to be presented with Andrea Rabinovitch's upbeat *Strut* which made no claim to carrying any profound message or to portraying

any particular abstraction or images. Rather, it was simply an energetic exhibition of the sheer joy of dancing and as such it worked very well. Even the company members, undoubtedly weary after a long, demanding program, seemed to shake off their fetters and take on a new vigour. With pseudo-African drum music, John Madill's jungle-like lighting, and costumes which gave enough illusion of the African. *Strut* came through with a swaggering, energetic mixture of the ethnic and the modern, along with some neat throw-away touches of humour which gave an extra snap to the performance.

Perhaps it takes the courage born of experience to be able to cease trying to be "meaningful"

and "relevant" and to aim primarily to entertain. Perhaps, too, it is part of the natural evolution of the choreographer that he or she begins by being largely concerned with dance as a means of communication, even when there is actually little to communicate or when the message is so obscure or personal that the audience is left bewildered and bored. But, as with all evolutionary processes, time is an important factor, and it is a sign of Webb's own maturation that he has given all of his company members a chance to begin presenting their own ideas, even though the results at this stage reflect the inexperience of their creators.

MURIEL STRINGER

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**Independent Dance Series III**  
Dancers' Studio West  
Calgary  
13-14 January, 1984.

The third performance in the Regional Independent Dance Series at Dancers' Studio West proved generally more exciting as a musical than as a dance event.

On the successful side of the program were local dancer (Denise Clarke and Edmonton independent and Brian Webb Dance Company member), Andrea Rabinovitch.

In her dance, *Big City '83*, Rabinovitch used an original soundtrack by Edmonton musicians Brett Miles, James Philp and Gary Myers, a cacophony of sound that brought the 'big city' into DSW.

Clad in sneakers, blue jeans and T-shirt Rabinovitch depicted a chaotic city scenario by interspersing frenetic movement with pedestrian walking, and at times, extended her long body to create moments of clarity.

Throughout *Big City* she

often confronted the audience with frank stares and semi-smiles in an effort toward character development; but she didn't go far enough. Rabinovitch obviously has theatrical potential and should cast away any reticence she has to produce clear characterizations successfully.

Rabinovitch had the same problem in *Belle*, choreographed by Debra Shantz, also of the Brian Webb Dance Company. The soundtrack for *Belle* is an original composition by Brett Miles and Gary Myers.

It's a good dance for Rabinovitch; it provides an outlet for her lyrical dance qualities, her theatricality, and her strong modern movement. The surprise transition in Rabinovitch's persona, a confident belle in a pale blue party dress, to an angst-ridden woman collapsed on the floor was, however, not as effective as it might have been if Rabinovitch was able to fully use her acting skills.

Clarke's dance, *Sincerely*, ended the shaky seven-dance

evening on an upbeat. Her confidence and distinct movement were obvious from the moment she clicked on the reading lamp and sat reading a letter in neutral mask and simple blouse and pants. She cast the letter away and began quick and sharp foot movements with sudden weight changes and extensions to a dynamic soundtrack by The Penguin Cafe. Although the movement was simple, Clarke's impeccable timing and unpredictable phrasing lent complexity to the dance.

*Sincerely* is a work in progress, and does not display the depth of Clarke's talent, but it easily stood above most of the other performances as a well thought-out improvisation. Not so *Rene*, a poor attempt at improvisation by Calgary dancer Mary Jo Fulmer danced to Ricki Le Jones' rendition of *Don't Walk Away Rene*.

Another Fulmer dance, *Jungle Prayers*, choreographed to shimmering electronic music by modernist Jon Hassell, had in fact begun the evening. In the first

part of the dance she effectively used a Japanese mask, intricate Balinese arm movements and mime. By simple head posturing Fulmer brought her mask to life, invoking winsome expressions, quizzical glances and defiant looks while her arms undulated and her hands rippled. Her mimetic gestures, pulling the entrails from within her body, were interesting to watch even though their intention was unclear.

When the Hassell music stopped and Fulmer unmasked herself stating that she had to follow her heart, the dance fell apart, and abruptly ended with her jizzily sidestepping off the stage.

A venue such as the Regional Independent Series at DSW is an invaluable testing ground for first-time performers; it is also an important outlet for those more experienced. Although the calibre of dancing is inconsistent, through this series we can look forward to the improvement of regional and local performance standards.

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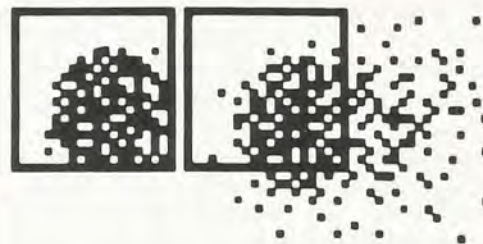
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**American Ballet Theatre**  
 War Memorial Opera House  
 San Francisco  
 21 February-4 March, 1984.

Superstars and fairy-tale ballets are as popular in San Francisco as they are everywhere else, and for its annual visit to that city American Ballet theatre offered the late David Blair's staging of *Swan Lake* five times and the new Baryshnikov/Anastos *Cinderella* thrice. Eight performances included four works by Twyla Tharp and a new staging by Natalia Makarova of the edited Petipa dance fragments we have come to know as *Paquita*, along with a selection of the company's heritage ballets. Mikhail Baryshnikov made only four appearances, dancing exclusively in Tharp trifles to houses which had been sold out shortly after a fortnight's casting had been announced. The local press jubilantly heralded the Tharp/Baryshnikov combo as ABT's biggest box-office whammy, but I'm inclined to believe that the company's artistic director could fill a house without Tharp's brilliant vehicles by merely appearing on stage for a modest display of his left tibia. As a name he continues to carry more clout than any other living dancer and — most likely — any other dance institution.

As a choreographer he laid an expensive egg with *Cinderella*, which is so dreary that no amount of work can possibly validate it short of scrapping the lot and asking Sir Frederick Ashton to come over and reset his version. The new \$1,000,000 production has no focus, no heart, no real wit and a minimum of dance interest. Prokofiev's brittle, sassy score never quite gets the dance impulse it cries for and, offering its best music in the first two acts (as do the composer's other ballets, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Stone Flower*) the ballet demands imaginative stage resources to keep the last act from becoming a downer. Obviously neither Baryshnikov nor his partner, Peter Anastos, gave much attention to matters of dramatic structure and musical requisites,



Cynthia Harvey as Cinderella and Kevin McKenzie as her prince in American Ballet Theatre's new production to the Prokofiev score.

concentrating more on giving their comics the mime equivalents of one-liner gags.

Santa Loquasto's all-purpose dull backdrop, a mosaic of metallic discs and squares, framed the frequently changed three-dimensional sets in the foreground. The kitchen structure, straight out of Hallmark, contains enough supplies and equipment to prepare and serve a banquet.

Scores of conspicuously expensive costumes are displayed (\$100,000 went into wigs alone) and while many of the individual designs are fetching they do little to establish dramatic identities. During the large ensemble scenes it's like contemplating samples in a monster fashion collection.

*Cinderella's* role offers small challenge to the ballerina as actress, dancer or technician; Prince Charming gets all the breaks, with the fleet, crisp leaps and turns which Baryshnikov himself does so well. The comics give cruel depictions, bound to offend all opponents of sexism. *Cinderella's* stepmother (who makes frequent wild entrances in a wheelchair) and the two

stepsisters are played by men who come across wearily as drag queens, and a mincing, pink-wigged dance master who gets them ready for the ball offers little contrast to his charges.

Cynthia Harvey and Kevin MacKenzie manage to rise above the trash and make us aware that they are splendid artists as well as good sports. A glowing rapport exists in this partnership, with both continuing to make big strides in their dancing. Harvey combines dignity and delicacy in her every movement, and MacKenzie, with his superb carriage and princely line may well be ABT's most elegant danseur noble since Igor Youskevitch.

Standeers convened in suffocating clusters to see Baryshnikov; so there were no seats available — least of all for visiting critics — on the nights that the Tharp pieces were displayed. A chance to contemplate some of the company's family jewels, however, made it clear that Baryshnikov has insisted on keeping ABT's early masterpieces alive. However, he uses them as teething rings for the company's junior dancers

before they are advanced to the now more essential plane of the Petipa ballets. In many ways this policy is a self-defeating one, for ABT audiences are not encouraged to take the company's crowning achievements seriously. Last year when Baryshnikov himself graced a revival of Agnes de Mille's *Three Virgins and a Devil*, a miniature of sublime wit was reborn as an audience favorite. In San Francisco a novice cast rendered a neat, competent performance of David Lichine's *Graduation Ball* in bright new decors by Rolf Gerard. But this was a champagne ballet danced by members of the Pepsi generation, and all the marrow is gone from the basic portrayals. Innocence, a human condition once easy to convey when this ballet was devised, is now one of the most difficult challenges facing today's ballet dancer who may be required to act.

Likewise, *Billy the Kid* no longer has the broad lunge and long thrusts that Eugene Loring once showed us in order to depict the vastness of America's plains. ABT's dancers now push back the frontier gently, as if

quietly closing a french door. Antony Tudor's *The Leaves are Falling* fared better, being only nine years old, closer to our times in dance values and having the continuity of some of its original dancers, including a restored Gelsey Kirkland who, graciously partnered by MacKenzie, made her matchless statement of this delicate ballet's pregnant mood.

Jerome Robbins' *Les Noces*, which is now danced to tapes when presented outside Manhattan to save the fortune required to rehearse and pay the singers and musicians, sadly conveys how art has become an albatross at ABT. Stubbornly maintained despite the sacrifice of its once festive format and danced with a reverent belief and a fervor lacking in every other ballet I saw this season, the work is barely tolerated by an audience fattened on Minkus and pink tutus and remains, 20 years after its conception, a ballet which few people have ever heard of, even after having seen it. How frustrated the dancers must be

after straining spirit, endurance and intelligence as participants in this remarkable kaleidoscope of ingeniously organized ritual movement to face the apathy that receives their two token curtain calls! The man behind me who summed up the evening, which had opened uneventfully with the innocuous *Paquita*, as "perfect except for that crazy Russian thing" speaks for an audience which hasn't evolved much since Pavlova began touring 74 years ago and which shows no signs of desiring a change. In these terms it's scary to contemplate what lies ahead for a company continually reliant on resources from 19th-century Europe and the fickle fortunes of superstars who have the habit of growing old soon and retiring early.

LELAND WINDREICH

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## Book Beat

**Balanchine's Ballerinas: Conversations with the Muses**, by Robert Tracy with Sharon DeLano. Musson Book Co. (New York: Simon & Schuster), 1983. 192 p. \$34.95.

The idea of taping interviews with Balanchine's major ballerinas occurred to Robert Tracy when he was a student of Melissa Hayden's at Skidmore College. As a dancer with Maria Tallchief's Chicago Lyric Opera Ballet and later as a scholarship student at the School of American Ballet, he had unusual opportunities to knock on doors. Because the interview process is at best a spotty way to deal with history, and because Tracy set out to deal with the ballerinas as muses rather than as peers, pawns or possible victims, the book which results is high in entertainment value but shallow as a document of a great choreographer's professional and personal relationships.

The interviews are short, and many of the 19 ballerinas had already aired their views in John Gruen's *The Private World of Ballet* or elsewhere. Thus Alexandra Danilova and the late Felia Doubrovska make statements which seem *déjà vu* despite their coloring with imperfections in English. But the bold recent images of them, Tamara Geva, and particularly of Tamara Toumanova and her legendary Mama are extraordinarily vivid, and Shonna Valeska's camera testifies to the endurance of star quality over the passing of years.

Of the dancers trained in America whom Balanchine ultimately inherited only Ruthanna Boris gets mouthy about such matters as rejection, forgotten promises and perfidy. Maria Tallchief and Melissa Hayden, both quite vocal elsewhere about the trials of being over the hill in a Balanchine ensemble, take a quieter stand for Tracy's inquiries. Lore becomes replaced by

shop talk when he speaks with those dancers who trained with Balanchine from childhood.

Missing in the array are some key protagonists: Vera Zorina, Tanaquil LeClercq and Gelsey Kirkland. If they declined to be interviewed, Tracy would have earned points by letting us know that their omission was not an oversight.

**Teaching the Magic of Dance**, by Jacques d'Amboise, Hope Cooke & Carolyn George. Musson Book Co. (New York: Simon & Schuster), 1983. 122p. \$24.95.

*Fat City* is the name of a typical extravaganza which the National Dance Institute presents each year at New York's Felt Forum. It features 1,000 children from the public schools, a troupe of ballet-trained city cops, and a pair of superstars from major dance companies. Its producer/director is former New York City Ballet principal, Jacques d'Amboise, who is responsible for both concept and result, and who recruits professionals from show business to costume the dancers from odds and ends and to supply the musical background.

It took a year of coaching and organizing to produce *Fat City*, which will have but one performance. Next year 1,000 new kids will start training for a comparable act. When d'Amboise first offered to teach dancing in the city schools, he never anticipated the volume of response he ultimately got. By working with a completely new group each year, he's able to spread his services around. Unusually talented or ambitious children may continue their dance training in any one of New York's dance centres; perhaps the balance may become the dance audience of tomorrow.

This fetching book, illustrated with photographs by d'Amboise's wife, Carolyn George, tells the story of the process

from recruiting to performance. Several superstars are recognizable in shots depicting their services, donated to the cause. D'Amboise's approach to children is simplistic: "Immediate approval, immediate disparagement". "We're here to dance", he starts off, "and it's not ballet. Because ballet's too hard for you, and you're not good enough for ballet. It's gonna be jazz and you're gonna need sneakers".

Their teacher's boundless energy springs from an endless natural ebullience and from the condition of his own crippled feet. After a lifetime of fractures, the second and third toes on each foot have been shortened and webbed together to prevent further injury. "I just can't stop moving", he explains. "If I do it hurts too much". Hopefully most of the kids in *Fat City* will avoid the penalties of a ballet dancer's career. And teachers who read their story may find suitable alternatives in their schools for those not destined to make the grade in ballet.

### In Brief:

*Lydia Lopokova*, edited by Milo Keynes (St. Martin's Press, 1983: \$25 US) is a delightful and generously illustrated tribute to his aunt and a companion volume to a collection of essays on her husband, Maynard Keynes, published in 1975. The versatile and witty Russian ballerina is viewed by peers and admirers in the milieu of the Diaghilev Ballets, by colleagues in the early British ballet and as a dutiful wife by friends in the Bloomsbury circle.

The ingredients of the American musical comedy are artfully discussed by Ethan Mordden in *Broadway Babies* (Oxford University Press, 1983: \$25.25), and in a chapter called "The Choreographers" he gives a splendid account of the evolution of Broadway dancing from "a function without a purpose" to what has become in some cases

the key issue in a production. Mordden deftly compares the character of work by de Mille, Robbins, Cole and Kidd, showing how the growing significance of the dance contribution has altered the nature of the music and the scenario itself.

*The Aesthetics of Movement* by Paul Souriau, first published in France in 1889, has been given its first English translation by the author's granddaughter, Manon Souriau. (University of Massachusetts Press, 1983: \$22.50 US). Dealing with the determination of movement according to physical laws, the author advances theories involving the expression and perception of movement and the evolution of critical judgment. Samples from Eadweard Muybridge's early photographic cycles of animals and humans in motion give historical perspective to this engrossing thesis, which will serve students of both kinetics and philosophy and will enrich the perspective of writers on dancing.

LELAND WINDREICH





## Noticeboard

**Craig Sterling**, for several years a leading and much admired member of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, died of brain cancer, November 21, 1983. Born in Hartford, Connecticut, where he began ballet studies, Sterling later attended the National Ballet School in Washington, D.C. and later the University of Utah, performing with Ballet West.

He joined the Royal Winnipeg Ballet at the age of 19 and rose to become a principal dancer. His good looks and handsome physique made Sterling an ideal ballet prince but he also excelled

in roles from the RWB's large contemporary repertoire.

Sterling, later danced with Sweden's Malmö State Theatre Ballet and with The Australian Ballet. On his return to North America he appeared with the Houston and Washington Ballets. At the time of his death he was administrator of the Ballet Centre in Charlottesville, Virginia. He is survived by his wife, Louise Naughton, formerly a principal dancer with the RWB and now director of the Charlottesville Ballet Centre. Their son Alexander was born 5 years ago.



Craig Sterling who died last year at age 32.

**Daniel Levéillé** hit the Toronto headlines in January when officials at Harbourfront's new Premiere Dance Theatre declined to use a poster provided by the choreographer in which a nude man was depicted from the

rear — with his hands bound!

According to Harbourfront's performing arts manager Tom Scurfield, as reported in *The Toronto Star*, the waterfront theatre did not want to present a controversial image — one



Harbourfront officials thought this image, which appeared on a poster for Daniel Levéillé's company appearance in Toronto, inappropriate and chose to use something different. Now you know what you missed!

“with its suggestions of bondage” — to the PDT's subscribers. According to Levéillé the offending poster captures the spirit of his work, “the humour, the violence, the sexual things”, but Harbourfront settled instead for the more staid image of clothed dancers in a scene from the choreographer's *But I Love You*. Toronto the Good triumphs once more!

**The du Maurier Council for the Performing Arts** has announced grants totalling \$275,000 in support of projects to be staged during the 1984-85 performance season. Dance organizations will receive a total of \$52,000 (20.7% of the funds allocated). Those organizations receiving grants are the Dance in Canada Association (\$17,000), the Royal Winnipeg Ballet (\$13,000), Les Grands Ballets Canadiens (\$12,000), Anna Wyman Dance Theatre (\$5,000) and La Troupe Folklorique Les Sortileges (\$5,000).

**Brian Macdonald** directed and choreographed the new musical *Duddy*. Based on Mordecai Richler's best-selling novel, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, the show has music by Mike Stoller and lyrics by Jerry Lieber, with sets by Phillip Silver (whose most recent work

includes *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *Hamlet* for the Grand Theatre in London) and costumes by Suzanne Mess.

Following its world premiere at Edmonton's Citadel Theatre on April 7, *Duddy* will play Saskatoon's Centennial Auditorium, May 10-13; Regina's Centennial Theatre, May 16-19; Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Theatre, May 22-27; Ottawa's National Arts Centre, May 31-June 3; Hamilton Place, June 5-9; Winnipeg's Centennial Concert Hall, June 12-16; Kitchener's Centre in the Square, June 19-23; Montreal's Place des Arts, June 25-30; and Toronto's O'Keefe Centre, July 3-15. *Duddy* is scheduled to open on Broadway in late September.

**The University of Waterloo** has published an updated and enlarged *Catalogue of the Dance Collection in the Doris Lewis Rare Book Room*. Issued as Number 10 in the library's Bibliography Series, the 210-page catalogue lists nearly 1,000 rare books on dance and ballet. Dance scholars may acquire copies at \$10.00 each from Jorn Jorgensen, Library Business Administrator, Dana Porter Arts Library, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3G1.

They're counting the pennies these days at the **National Ballet of Canada's** downtown Toronto headquarters and artistic director **Erik Bruhn** says the company's crippling financial plight is, "not exactly what I thought I was getting myself into".

In late January the National admitted its books were not quite as healthy as it would like them to be. In fact, there's red ink spilling all over them. The November hometown season left too many seats unoccupied in Toronto's cavernous O'Keefe Centre and the company took home \$200,000 less from the box office than expected. Add that to the existing deficit and the total figure tops a million — not the end of the road for a large performing arts institution with an annual operating budget nudging relentlessly towards the \$10 million mark, but still cause for anxiety.

Fortunately, the winter season in February exceeded projected box-office takings with an overall attendance of 73 per cent of capacity but that did not spare the jobs of 16 musicians who were let go to reduce the National's orchestra to a paltry 39 members.

Thankfully, hard times do not seem to have dampened the company's morale if the quality

of recent performances is anything to judge by.

Erik Bruhn must take the credit for this since he has not let troubles with the bank deter him from his objectives to shake up the company and give it a new look. Bruhn says the last few months have been hectic and he's tired of all the meetings he's had to attend. At times, he admits, relations with the board have been strained as Bruhn has fought successfully to maintain the dancing roster at 67 names. "I knew", says the shrewd director, "that if I gave in I'd never get those dancers back".

Bruhn believes in keeping the lines of communication open within the company so everyone knows what the situation is. Bruhn says he spends a lot of time talking to dancers individually in his office, helping them clarify their career goals, giving them an honest perspective on their prospects in the company, telling those who've been used to steady work year round that they'll have to settle for less secure contractual arrangements. Bruhn thinks he's managed to close the gap between himself, "the boss", and the dancers, many of whom he's known since they were in short pants and uniform skirts at the National Ballet School. But,

adds Bruhn ruefully, "one of the hardest things is to ask people who've already given blood and sweat, to make further sacrifices for the company".

The National's new artistic director says he could not have survived the difficult period of settling into a company in crisis unless he'd had the support of his artistic administrator, Valerie Wilder. "If she wasn't here", says Bruhn, "I wouldn't be here".

Meanwhile, Bruhn has begun to forge the National Ballet into the company he wants it to become. Not everyone in the National's February 18 gala audience found the heavy injection of modern dance — everything from Robert Desrosiers and Dancers through Danny Grossman to Toronto Dance Theatre — quite what they had expected. Some were also upset that the man who sold the show, superstar Mikhail Baryshnikov, decided to eschew classical dancing in favour of Twyla Tharp's *Sinatra Suite*. But, liked or not, Bruhn's gala got its message across as clearly as had the addition of Grossman's *Endangered Species* to the National's mainstream repertoire.

First, he was telling everyone that ballet does not exist in a corner of its own, that move-

ment comes in many forms, each worthy of respect and attention. Also, he let it be known that the National, whatever its directors may at times have suggested, does not see itself as the Ark of the Covenant as far as Canadian dance is concerned. It recognizes its place in the community of Canadian dancers and companies and wants to be a vital part of that community.

Bruhn has also made some bold and timely choices in his casting of roles. Most significantly he's extended the work of predecessor Alexander Grant by showcasing the company's fine assembly of younger male dancers and he provided two highpoints to the National's February season by giving the pinnacle role of Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake* to Sabina Allemann, partnered by Italian Marco Pierin, and to Gizella Witkowsky, with Gregory Osborne as her Prince. Both gave extraordinarily strong debuts and each made her mark in individual ways. It was a dazzling exhibition of the riches Bruhn is now responsible for nurturing and also a sign that the National is not letting its money problems interfere with its primary purpose — to dance.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

**EDAM**, Vancouver's experimental dance and music collective, made its tour of Eastern Canada this spring, with performances in London, Sherbrooke, Montreal, St. John's, Charlottetown and Halifax. Featured on the tour was EDAM's first fully collaborative work, *Run Raw: Theme and Deviation*, a simulation of competitive sports that captures what can best be described as an athletic aesthetic.

**Pacific Ballet Theatre** toured 18 B.C. and Alberta centres during its spring tour. Repertoire included *Pierrot 1980*, *Tidescapes*, *Bluebird Pas de Deux*, *Ebony Concerto*, *Pas de Quatre*, *Humanic Mechanic*, *Autumn Score 2-2* and a new work by

Artistic Director Renald Rabu.

The company returns to Vancouver for performances at the Queen Elizabeth Playhouse, April 26-28.

**The Karen Jamieson Dance Company**, which made its debut in February, will be in residence at Vancouver's Arts Umbrella Arts Centre for two weeks in April. In addition to works from the general repertoire, performances will feature the company's signature piece, *Sisyphus*, and the premiere of a new work.

**Anna Wyman Dance Theatre** completed its first major tour of Europe last fall. The highly successful two-and-a-half month tour took the company to France, Belgium, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. They were

met with critical acclaim and standing ovations throughout the trip. Financial assistance for the tour, one of the longest ever undertaken by a Canadian modern dance group, came from the Department of External Affairs, the B.C. Cultural Fund and the B.C. Lottery Fund.

The company has been invited to perform in June at Germany's prestigious Tanz Festival Nordrhein-Westfalen. They will appear in Leverkusen, Neuss, Wuppertal, Cologne and Dusseldorf.

During the past winter, Anna Wyman set *A Dancer's Circus* on students of the National Ballet School in Toronto. They will perform this work at the Toronto International Festival in June.

## ALBERTA

**The Dr. Betty Mitchell Theatre** in the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium, Calgary, was officially dedicated on January 25. The 250-seat theatre (with 30 seats that can be added if the full thrust stage is not needed) is self-contained within the Auditorium and is equipped with the latest lighting and audio equipment.

**The Banff Centre School of Fine Arts** will present Frederick Ashton's *Façade* during the Banff Festival of the Arts in July. The ballet will be staged by Robyn Hughes, with finishing touches to be applied by Alexander Grant, former Artistic Director of The National Ballet of Canada.

Negotiations are also underway to produce George Balanchine's *Allegro Brillante* as well as two pas de deux staged by Laura Alonso of the Cuban Ballet.

David Earle, co-founder and resident choreographer of Toronto Dance Theatre will create a new work for the Banff students.

#### SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan Ballet Theatre, now in its second season, is expanding its repertoire. Among new works are *Variations on a String*, by ballet mistress Hazel Ann Olson; *Baroque Dances* and *On Company Time*, both by artistic director Marie Nychka; and *Eyes of the Heart*, a pas de deux by Ross Brierton.

Principal dancers this season are April Chow, Lorne Matthews, Andrew Ross Nicholson and Marie Nychka. Members of the Apprentice Program are Cheryl Tweet, Darla Thompson, Darleen Schlademann, Suzanne Stewart, Morel Carefoot and Barbara Grant.

#### MANITOBA

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet will add three works to its repertoire during the 1984-85 season: *Song of a Wayfarer*, by Maurice Béjart; *Façade*, by Frederick Ashton; and *Symphony in D*, by Jiri Kylian. Kylian is the fourth Dutch choreographer (after Rudi van Dantzig, Hans van Manen and Nils Christie) to contribute work to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

Artistic Director Arnold Spohr also announced that Peter Wright's popular production of *Giselle* will again be presented during the company's home performances in Winnipeg.

Performance dates for the 1984-85 Winnipeg seasons are October 17-21, December 26-30, March 6-10 and April 17-21.

During March and April this year, the RWB undertook a lengthy Canadian tour which included visits to the Ontario cities of Toronto, Windsor, London, Barrie, Kingston and Ottawa, to St. Johns, Newfoundland, in New Brunswick to



Bill Evans — new artistic director of Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers.

Fredericton, Sackville and St. John and to Halifax, Nova Scotia. The company also made an important visit to the Brooklyn Academy of Music just across the East River from Manhattan where RWB star Evelyn Hart gave her New York City area debut in a role for which she has already become traditionally renowned — *Giselle*.

Principal dancer David Peregrine is currently taking a five-month leave of absence from the Royal Winnipeg Ballet to dance with the San Francisco Ballet. Asked why he chose the San Francisco company, Peregrine said, "for the growth. To achieve all that I can as an artist it's important to meet new challenges. I will have an opportunity to learn both new works and new styles; and though it's a bit frightening, it's also very exciting."

San Francisco Ballet's repertoire includes works by its directors Michael Smuin and Lew Christensen, Jiri Kylian, Arthur Mitchell and George Balanchine. Peregrine will appear with the company through May 1984.

**Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers'** new artistic director **Bill Evans** is rapidly putting his

stamp on the company with ambitious plans that could see it expand its activities into Saskatchewan. Under the terms of a proposal announced in March, the Winnipeg company would in effect make Regina its home away from home, giving performances in that city on a regular basis. It would co-operate with the existing Regina Modern Dance Works, (which since the departure of its former heads Maria Formolo and Keith Urban has functioned principally as a teaching organization), by offering two Saskatchewan dancers assured positions in the Winnipeg company.

Having left Seattle and his former company, Bill Evans is rapidly familiarizing himself with the Canadian dance scene. He presented an evening of solo works at Winnipeg's Gas Station Theatre on April 17 and from May 16-19, Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers will perform an evening of his choreography at the Manitoba Theatre Centre Warehouse.

Another of Evans' projects is the development within Canada of The Bill Evans Summer Institutes of Dance which have been in operation since 1976. In 1984 sessions will be held in Meadville, Pennsylvania, Port

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Townsend, Washington, and in Winnipeg, (June 4-30). Each program offers a comprehensive range of classes as well as special courses in such areas as music for dancers, composition, injury prevention and treatment, and improvisation. Evens tells us that his ambition is to consolidate these efforts over the next few years to establish a major summer festival in Winnipeg, what Evans calls "a national and international centre for new movement studies and new dance."

## ONTARIO

**Graeme Murphy**, artistic director of Australia's Sydney Dance Company is creating the choreography for the **Canadian Opera Company's** production of Benjamin Britten's acclaimed, *Death in Venice* which will be presented this June in Toronto.

Murphy and COC general director Lotfi Mansouri held extensive auditions in Toronto and New York to find the right dancer for the key role of Tadzio — and others to portray his friends. The event will mark Graeme Murphy's debut as a choreographer in Canada. The Melbourne native has danced with and directed SDC since 1976 and has also choreographed for the Australian Ballet. His controversial *Daphnes and Chloë* for SDC featured dancers on skateboards and included a steamy nude shower scene!

**Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise** celebrated its fifth birthday at St. Lawrence Hall in Toronto on April 12. More than a dozen performers and performing arts companies, among them Toronto Dance Theatre, Dancemakers, Robert Desrosiers, Claudia Moore, The Acme Harpoon Company and Brenda Nielson, contributed their talent as a birthday gift to T.I.D.E.

*The Birthday Party* served as a fund-raising event for the company and, to this end, incorporated the birthday tradition of giving presents. Admission was five dollars and a birthday gift, large or small (from postage stamps to a cash donation to a word processor). These dona-



The Canadian Children's Dance Theatre delighted Toronto audiences once again with a program of mostly new works at The Winchester Street Theatre in April.

tions will aid directly in the development and growth of the company.

**The Canadian Children's Dance Theatre** presented *Spring*, a showcase of new dances, in the Winchester Street Theatre in Toronto, April 6-7. After its warm reception at last summer's Dance in Canada conference in Saskatoon, the company has once again been invited to make a conference appearance, this time at DIC's lavish '84 extravaganza to be held in Toronto, June 26-July 1.

**The National Ballet of Canada** appears at the O'Keefe Centre in Toronto, April 25-May 13, with guest artists **Evelyn Hart** and **Rudolf Nureyev**, who returns to the company after a lengthy absence.

The company will perform *Giselle*, Nureyev's version of *The Sleeping Beauty* and a mixed program featuring a new staging of *La Bayadère*, Act II, by Natalia Makarova and Glen Tetley's *Sphinx*, which received its first national Ballet performances last season.

*Oiseaux Exotiques* (The Birds

of Paradise), a new ballet by Resident Choreographer Constantin Patsalas, will receive its world premiere during the spring season. Based on lively Venezuelan folk songs, the music has been orchestrated by Canadian composer Harry Freedman. Sets and costumes are by Desmond Heeley.

**Evelyn Hart** will appear in *Giselle* and *La Bayadère*, Act II, partnered by Frank Augustyn. Rudolf Nureyev will partner Karen Kain and Veronica Tennant in *The Sleeping Beauty*.

**Mary Jago**, principal dancer with The National Ballet of Canada, will retire from dancing at the end of the company's spring season in Toronto. She will join the National Ballet's artistic staff in June. Canadian dance historian and critic Penelope Doob will be giving *Dance in Canada* readers an intimate personal and artistic profile of Jago in a forthcoming issue.

**George Crum**, the National Ballet's musical director and principal conductor since the company's foundation in 1951, has also announced that he will be retiring at the end of June.

**Toronto Dance Theatre** made its major hometown appearance of the 1983/84 season at the Premiere Dance Theatre, April 3-7, as part of the "Great Performers" subscription series. Performances featured works by the company's resident choreographers — Peter Randazzo, David Earle, Patricia Beatty and Christopher House — as well as appearances by Randazzo, Earle and Beatty, co-founders of Toronto Dance Theatre, and marked official celebration of TDT's 15th anniversary.

**Ottawa Dance Theatre** made its official Toronto debut in March at the Winchester Street Theatre with a program of new or recent works by choreographers Dwight Shelton, ODT's ballet master, Carol Anderson, Christine Kozlowski, Anna Blewchamp and artistic director Judith Davis. A similar program was later presented by the company in Ottawa.

**The Danny Grossman Dance Company**, followed its hometown appearance at Harbourfront's Premiere Dance Theatre last fall — which included the

introduction of Grossman's latest work *Shaman* — prepared for its current tour of Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and England. On their return in May, the Grossman dancers will be visiting Quebec.

Meanwhile, Danny Grossman found time to appear in the National Ballet of Canada's February 18 gala, performing *Curious Schools of Theatrical Dancing: Part I* and also set his *Endangered Species* on the National, (see a review in this issue). Later in the spring Grossman will be off to Paris where his friend Rudolf Nureyev, who now directs the city's illustrious Opera Ballet, has asked him to choreograph.

In the fall the company will be off on its travels again, this time to South America.

**The National Ballet School** is already making plans for this fall's celebration of the world famous institution's 25th birthday. During a two-day event, November 20 and 21, many of the school's graduates as well as leading artists from the national

and international dance community will be gathering in Toronto. There will be a special Silver Anniversary performance at the O'Keefe Centre with new ballets from American choreographer Glen Tetley, Dutch National Ballet director Rudi van Dantzig, Hamburg State Opera Ballet head John Neumeier and others. The school is currently trying to locate all former students who have lost touch so that they can be invited to join in the celebrations. So, if you're one of those, pick up the phone and call (416) 964-3780.

**The Art Gallery at Toronto's Harbourfront** has mounted a special exhibition entitled *Enter Stage Rite* which celebrates the creative genius of theatrical designers as well as the Toronto International Festival, to be held this June. Internationally renowned designers whose work is on display are Germany's Jürgen Rose for the National Ballet of Canada's production of *Onegin*, restaged from the choreography of the late John Cranko.



Mary Jago, who retires from the stage this May after 18 years with the National Ballet, seen here with Rudolf Nureyev in one of her most acclaimed roles — as The Lady in White from John Neumeier's *Don Juan*.

## QUEBEC

**Les Grands Ballets Canadiens** recently announced plans for its 1984-85 season, a season in which it will offer traditional works such as Balanchine's *Serenade* and Fokine's *Les Sylphides* together with such selections from its repertoire of contemporary works as Judith Marcuse's *Seascape*, Milko Sparembek's *The Soldier's Song* and James Kudelka's recently premiered *Alliances*.

*Alliances*, set to Brahm's *Piano Concerto in D Minor*, was well received by critics after premiers in Quebec City and Montreal and shows a continuous line of choreographic development from Kudelka's big hit of last season, *In Paradisum*.

As part of a cultural exchange between Canada and the People's Republic of China, choreologist **Zhang Yuyi** came to Montreal in December to stage a traditional folk dance, *The Red Ribbon Dance*, for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. The company will perform this work in China when they tour the Far East this summer.

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens returns to New York's City Center, April 17-22. They will present the US premieres of James Kudelka's latest ballet, *Alliances*, Brian Macdonald's *Findings* and *Quest*, by American choreographer John Butler. Other works scheduled include Kudelka's *In Paradisum*, George Balanchine's *Capriccio*, a revival of David Lichine's *Graduation Ball* and *Seascape*, by Judith Marcuse.

**Susan Macpherson**, in her first full solo evening since 1981, performed *Personal Collection* at La Maison de la Danse in Montreal in February. The two sold-out performances featured works by Doris Humphrey, James Kudelka, Paul André-Fortier, Robert Cohan and Linda Rabin. Macpherson was joined for one duet by James Kudelka, principal dancer with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens.

Following a European tour, Macpherson will perform *Personal Collection* at the Festival d'Été de Québec and at Ottawa's

Astrolabe Summer Dance Series.

**Le Groupe de la Place Royale** held one of its regular in-house presentations of new choreography by company members in Ottawa at the end of March with works by Bill James, Janet Oxley and Tassy Teekman. This spring Le Groupe leaves for a tour of France. James's multimedia work based on an imaginary confrontation between Karl Marx and Charles Darwin drew careful attention from the critics. Oxley used music of Erik Satie, rearranged for electronic instruments, as the basis for her piece, *The Three Distinct Fantasies of a Jaded Candy-Striper*. Teekman's *Message on the Wall* raised its own set of questions by posing the situation of an individual partitioned off from the immediate environment by walls.

Montreal's glass and concrete downtown convention centre swung to the the beat of rock'n'roll, jazz and disco as well as classical and other assorted musical forms for a four-day extravaganza — **Danse '84**, March 22-25. Experts in every imaginable kind of dance were on hand as well as performers from the Royal Winnipeg and National Ballets. One of the program's highlights was a super-disco with the inclusion of break-dancers from New York. **Danse '84** included commercial stands for all kinds of dance products and services, as well as a dance competition with total prizes in excess of \$6,000. There was also a special tribute to Grands Ballets Canadiens founder, **Ludmilla Chiriaeff**.

## NOVA SCOTIA

Following a spring tour of Nova Scotia by Newfoundland Dance Theatre and Nova Dance Theatre, made possible through the second interprovincial cultural exchange between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, a reciprocal tour of Newfoundland by the same two companies is scheduled for the fall of 1984.

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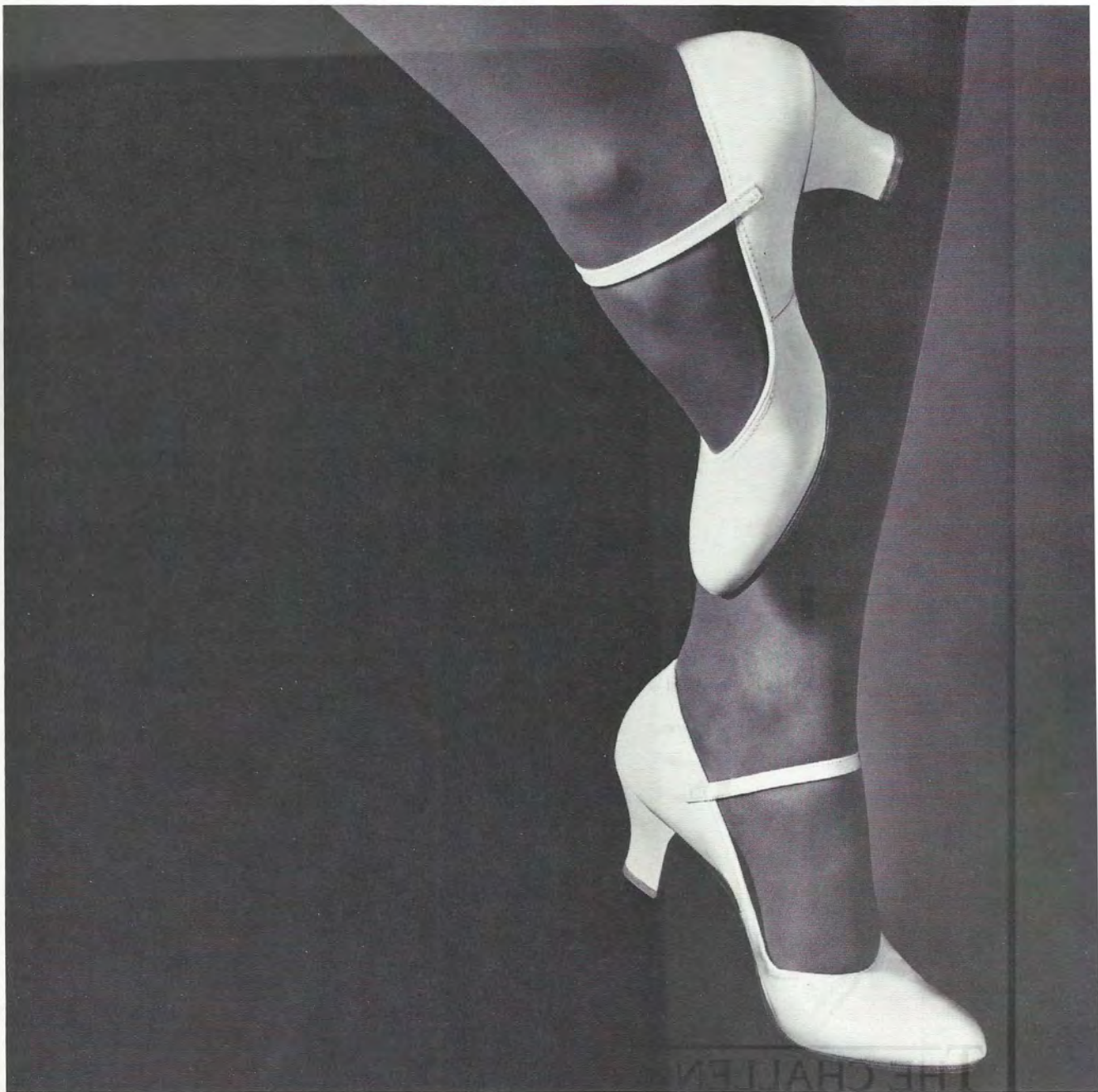
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