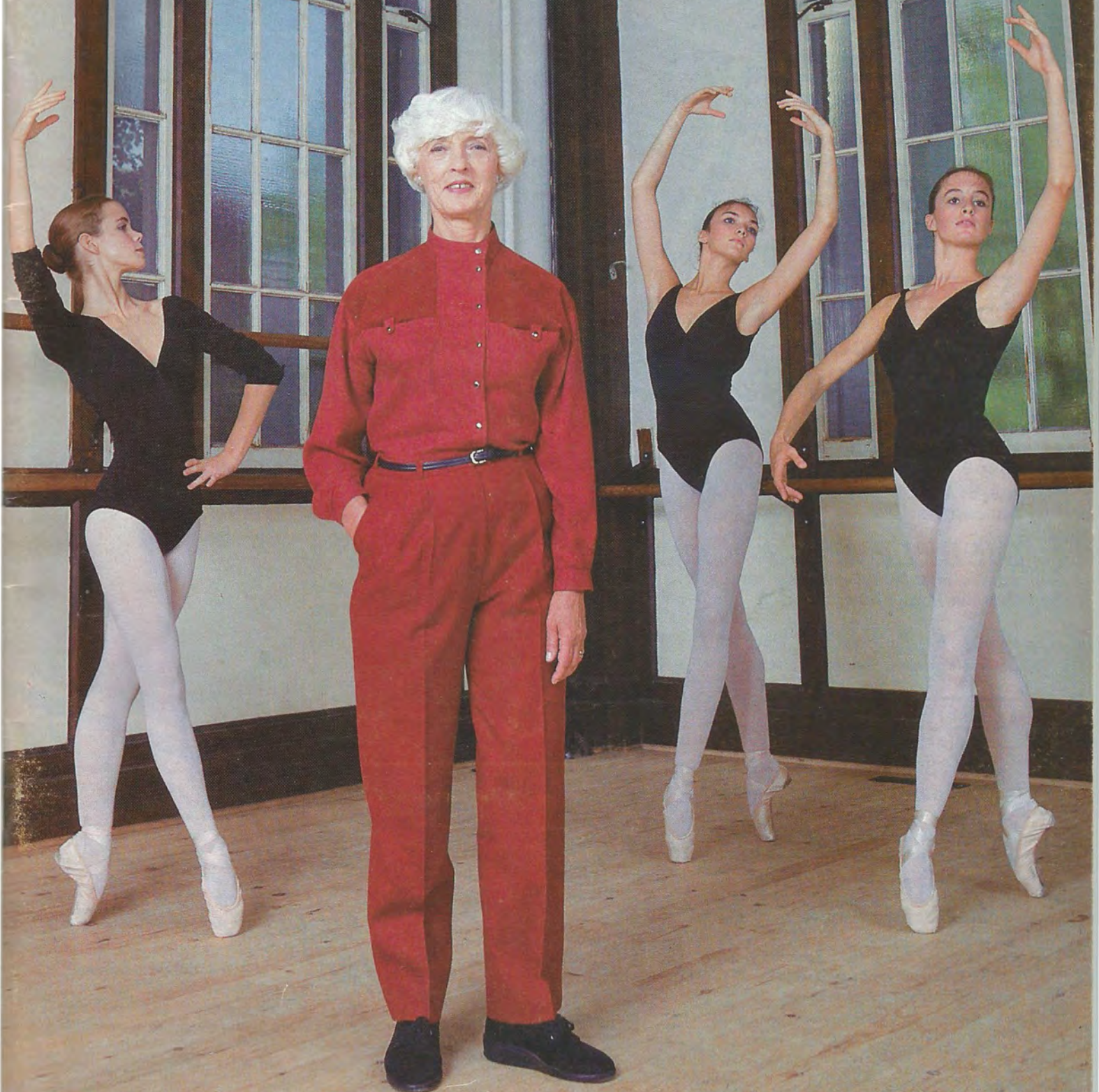


Fall 1984 Automne S3

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d'après/after Perrot et Coralli/Anton Dolin
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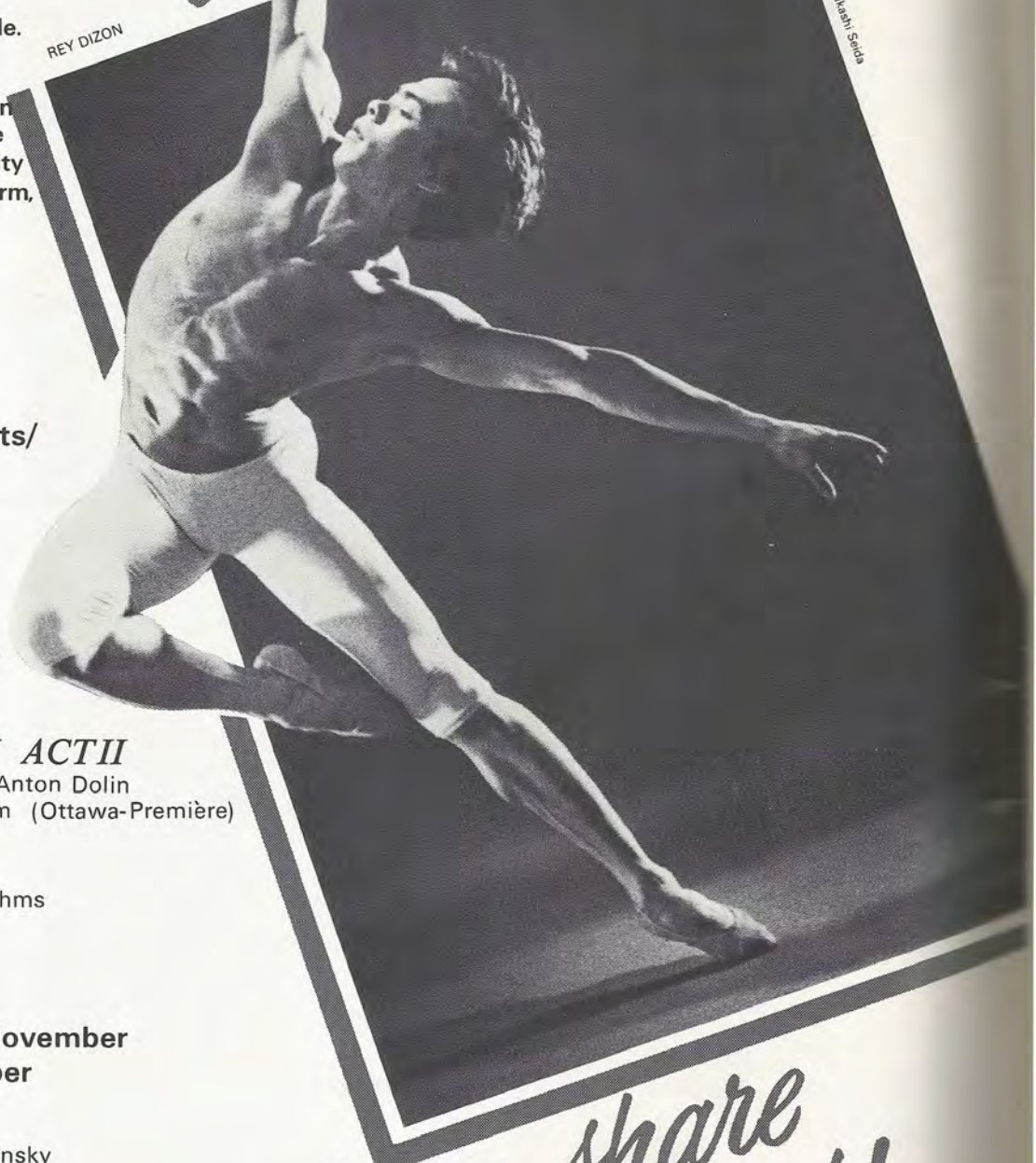
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COVER: Betty Oliphant, founder of the National Ballet School, and students Dominique Dumais, Jennifer Fournier and Caroline Richardson.
Photograph by Joseph Ciancio.

Celebration

The National Ballet School Marks Its 25th Anniversary

by William Littler

There was a warehouse building on Dupont worth considering, and an old men's home on Seaton that might do in a pinch, but when Elsie Agnew and Mildred Wickson set eyes on that Quaker meeting house, the one with the columned portico on Maitland Street, they knew they had found what they were looking for. It needed work. The raked floor would have to go, likewise some of the walls. But Celia Franca, Betty Oliphant and just about everyone else agreed: this was going to be the school.

That was all of 25 years ago, but the Quaker meeting house at 111 Maitland Street in downtown Toronto is still the home of the National Ballet School and, if its present occupants have anything to say in the matter, it probably will continue to be so for many years to come.

If, as the late Polly Adler once put it, a house is not a home, neither is a meeting house a school. It all depends on what goes on inside. All the same, something about the setting, even in its de-consecrated state, seemed to bless the enterprise about to take place beneath its roof.

Better make that *roofs*. For, over the succeeding years, the house on Maitland Street exhibited a Topsy-like propensity to grow, gathering unto itself adjoining and neighbouring houses and eventually, courtesy of the architectural firm of Armstrong and Molesworth, achieving a remarkable integration of residential space, classrooms and studios, connected by subterranean passageways which, if they hadn't come along so late in time, might have been accused of giving birth to the nickname by which ballet beginners are identified at the Paris Opéra—*petits rats*.

On one level the story of the National Ballet School could almost be called a tale of real estate. There has always been a space problem and the buying and selling of houses by Betty Oliphant and her eagle-eyed board has marked the stages in the School's growth.

It might even be argued that Betty Oliphant bought the first house herself and that it stood at 444 Sherbourne Street.

For that was the address of the school she ran before there was such a thing as the National Ballet of Canada, and the school she continued to run until closing its doors to become the first principal of the company's school.

It was the company's school at first, at least in the eyes of Celia Franca and her supporters. As soon as she crossed Canada to recruit the dancers who would become the National Ballet's charter members, Franca realized, as she later wrote, that "if the National Ballet was to become a permanent institution we would have to establish a residential school in which we could house talented young students and also provide them with a well-rounded academic and artistic education. Only in this way could the continuity of the company be ensured and only in this way could it rely on its new members having an adequate and standard training."

Those charter members of the National Ballet had nothing approaching a standard training. Some had almost no ballet training at all. What a contrast to the situation today, when two-thirds of the company can look back on their years in green blazers, under the tutelage of Miss O. Most of the company's biggest stars, dancers such as Frank Augustyn, Vanessa Harwood, Karen Kain, Nadia Potts, Kevin Pugh and Veronica Tennant, owe their formative training to the teachers on Maitland Street.

Among the 284 students who survived the high drop-out rate to graduate, 181 may have become professional dancers, but by no means all of them wound up rehearsing at St. Lawrence Hall. Some went to other Canadian companies, whether Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet or Anna Wyman Dance Theatre; some travelled south of the border to American Ballet Theatre, the Martha Graham company and the Metropolitan Opera; still others have taken up European residence, with the Royal Danish Ballet, the Stuttgart Ballet or the Dutch National Ballet.

For, like the National Theatre School, the National Ballet School has become a cosmopolitan institution. More than 700



Eugen Valukin (shown here with Kristina Sealander) has been a guest teacher at the National Ballet School on several occasions.



William Stolar, David Nixon and Kevin Pugh with teacher Daniel Seillier.



Sabina Allemann of the National Ballet of Canada and Jeffrey Kirk of the Hamburg Ballet in the pas de deux from *Don Quixote*, staged by Eugen Valukin. Both dancers are graduates of the National Ballet School.

students audition for admittance each year, from coast to coast, and all 10 provinces are represented on its class lists. Its alumni consider the world their oyster and the world has been more than ready to accept them.

Perhaps there is no better illustration of this last point than the events of June 1981, when a group of graduates and senior students flew to Moscow and walked away with more medals and prizes than the competitors of any other nation—save the Soviet Union itself—in the Moscow International Ballet Competition. Jurors were actually talking about a Canadian school in ballet, notable for cleanliness of technique, purity of style and musicality.

It wasn't the School's only such triumph. Karen Kain had earlier won a silver medal at Moscow and Martine van Hamel a gold medal at Varna, while Owen Montague became a medalist in Jackson as well as Moscow.

But Betty Oliphant has never been anxious to measure her school's achievement in precious metals. If anything, she has taken greater pride in the words of important visitors who have observed and taught and left verbal bouquets in their wake.

Barely two years after the doors had been opened, John

Hart, ballet master of the Royal Ballet, and Igor Belsky of the Kirov Ballet both extended invitations to the girls to go on to their schools after finishing the National Ballet's course. "No dilettantism," said Belsky. "Very professional." A couple of years later, more Russian visitors expressed similar comments, with Leonid Lavrovsky of the Bolshoi Ballet declaring the National Ballet School the best he had encountered in North America.

Through much of its history the School has had what one might call a Russian connection, whether through brief visits by the likes of Galina Ulanova and Rudolf Nureyev, or through repeated teaching stints by the Bolshoi's Eugen Valukin, whose regard for the institution was so high that he agreed to coach its representatives in competition with his own countrymen in the most recent Moscow trials.

Betty Oliphant came to an admiration of Russian methods understandably enough as a former pupil of Tamara Karsavina, and her invitation to sit on juries in Moscow and even appear as a guest teacher at the Bolshoi School gives a clue to the mutuality of the admiration. At one point, Arnold Haskell, late director of Britain's Royal Ballet School, went so far as to identify what was coming out of Toronto as an Anglo-

Russian style, a designation Oliphant did not refute.

But the Anglo part of it is also significant. When James Monahan, Haskell's successor, visited the School in Toronto, he came away feeling that he and Betty Oliphant were on very similar tracks. Indeed, teachers from both institutions have wound up on each other's staff.

In Toronto, however, there have been other significant influences as well. For many years no teacher exerted a stronger impact in class than Daniel Seillier, who not only brought the French tradition to Maitland Street, but communicated it exclusively in the French language. Then there was Erik Bruhn, pride of the Danish school, who has not only taught the boys repeatedly, but has even set a ballet on them. Whenever Betty Oliphant and her staff have found ideas worth importing, they have put them to the test.

They would argue, and competition judges have agreed with them, that the result is not a style, but an adaptability to many styles. At various times, Graham technique, Spanish dance and a variety of other disciplines have been incorporated into the curriculum to strengthen the versatility that is one of education's prime objectives. What is not cultivated is mannerism, a term sometimes confused with style. The Maitland Street objective has been to turn over to the choreographer an instrument adaptable to his expressive will.

If that sounds slightly Orwellian, one has only to confront the actual students to be reassured. Automaton they are not.

Moreover, their academic education, supervised for many years by Lucy Potts, seeks to open doors to the outside world rather than close them inward. If National Ballet School graduates have found access easy to major ballet and modern dance companies, they have just as readily gone on to professions outside the world of pirouettes and extensions. The school has produced doctors, nurses, teachers, even a banker and a landscape architect. Languages are cultivated. Theatres are visited. Body and mind experience partnership.

Not that the atmosphere is tension-free. Quite the contrary. There have been nervous breakdowns and rebellions of one kind or another. Any institution which brings people together in a disciplined, competitive environment is bound to foster a certain amount of stress. That is why psychiatric counselling is made available; that is why pupils have more than their limbs attended to by support staff.

Some pupils, nevertheless, do graduate with psychic scars. Some feel that a hothouse is no substitute for a garden, that a residential school necessarily restricts the full flowering of adolescence. Others feel that the self-discipline fostered on Maitland Street has enabled them to survive in a professional world in which competition is a daily reality. The jury, in a sense, is bound to be divided in its verdict.

Or to put the metaphor another way, the jury is still out. At the age of 25, the National Ballet School is still a relatively young institution, struggling to find the best ways to produce



Returning from Moscow in 1981: Kevin Pugh, Mary McDonald (principal pianist with the National Ballet of Canada), Martine Lamy, Sabina Allemann, Betty Oliphant and Kim Glasco.

Barry Gray



Lucy Potts (shown here with Veronica Tennant) has supervised the academic training of countless students at the National Ballet School.

dancers. It is fighting for a stage training facility, a proper theatrical environment in which to prepare its students for the life of the theatre. It is searching for increased financial support to maintain an admissions policy based solely on talent. It is looking for ways to build upon Betty Oliphant's foundations.

For, as the lady herself put it a few years ago, when receiving an honorary doctorate from Queen's University: "When I became director and principal of the National Ballet School in 1959, I shared with the authors of the Massey Report an ideal. When defining education they used these words: 'Education is the progressive development of the individual in all his faculties, physical and intellectual, aesthetic and moral. As a result of the disciplined growth of the entire personality, the educated man shows a balanced development of all his powers; he has fully realized his human possibilities.'

"And so I set out to create a school in which the students would not be deprived of the chance to develop their full potential just because they happened to be drawn towards a career which demands intensive training from the age of 10 years."

The evidence suggests that Betty Oliphant created that school. And to those who would minimize the accomplishment, a question is put by Lincoln Kirstein, general director

of the New York City Ballet. "Do you know how lucky you are to have a school like that?" Kirstein asked, rhetorically, a few years ago. "It is the equal in essence and potential of the Kirov School in Leningrad and the Royal Ballet School. I'm envious of you. Standards are slipping like mad these days and this school is like an oasis." ●

Photographs courtesy of the Archives, National Ballet of Canada.



William Littler, dance and music critic of *The Toronto Star* and a visiting lecturer at the University of Waterloo, is writing a book on the National Ballet school to be published by McClelland and Stewart.



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The Canada Council Conseil des Arts du Canada

It gives me great pleasure to join "Dance in Canada," as well as members and supporters of the dance community in Canada, in saluting the National Ballet School on the occasion of its 25th anniversary.

As Chairman of the Canada Council I am conscious of the School's remarkable achievements and happy that we have been able to assist it, on behalf of all Canadians, in carrying out its important work. As a fellow artist I have the greatest admiration for Miss Oliphant and her talented staff, students, and graduates, whose contribution to their profession and adherence to standards of excellence have been recognized world-wide. As a Canadian I am proud that my country is home to one of the great training institutions that prepare young people for a professional career in dance.

This is a time to celebrate the National Ballet School, and to wish it continued success well into the future.

C'est avec joie que je me joins à l'équipe de "Danse au Canada" et à tous les membres de la communauté canadienne de la danse pour offrir mes félicitations à l'École nationale de ballet à l'occasion de son 25^e anniversaire.

Comme présidente du Conseil des Arts du Canada, je suis sensible aux réalisations de l'École et fière de l'appui que le Conseil des Arts a pu, au nom de tous les Canadiens, lui apporter dans l'accomplissement de son oeuvre. Etant moi-même artiste, j'ai la plus grande admiration pour Madame Oliphant, pour son personnel, ses élèves et les diplômés de son école, aux talents si remarquables. Grâce à l'engagement de chacun, l'école s'est fait connaître dans le monde entier par la qualité de la formation qu'elle dispense. A titre de Canadienne, je suis fière que mon pays puisse s'enorgueillir de posséder l'une des grandes écoles de danse qui prépare nos jeunes à la carrière de leur choix.

C'est l'occasion toute désignée pour fêter l'École nationale de ballet et pour lui souhaiter autant de succès dans les années à venir qu'au cours des vingt-cinq premières.

Maureen Forrester
Maureen Forrester
Chairman/Présidente

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The National Tap Dance Company of Canada gratefully acknowledges the support of the province of Ontario through the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture and the Ontario Arts Council; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto; and the city of Toronto.

Bringing Professionalism to Street Theatre: Festival Characters of Vancouver

by Paula Citron

Bathed in glorious sunshine, Quebec City is wearing a festive air. The quaint old cobblestone streets are lined with banners and every open space within the walled town has been converted into a performance area; the city has become a feast of sights and sounds. Children are sporting whimsically painted faces created by armies of street artists; teenagers in Renaissance dress are distributing handbills announcing the day's free events. It is Québec d'Été, the lavish celebration to honour the founding of New France by Jacques Cartier 450 years ago, and the thousands of tourists thronging the city are being treated to a never-ending procession of street performers and formal concerts running the gamut of the entertainment spectrum.

In one corner of Parc Montmorency overlooking the St. Lawrence, white canvas tents act as dressing-rooms, and curious crowds watch the entertainers prepare. One group, Festival Characters of Vancouver, begins to put on bizarre costumes and masks, to the delight of the onlookers, particularly the children. Once ready, the four performers, completely transformed, leave their tent and head to the centre of the park, followed by some of the crowd. The strangely garbed figures fan out and become motionless, while the spectators disperse with them, following the most intriguing character.

After a long silence, as if by some hidden command, the performers move to the entrance of the park, where they form a frozen tableau. The crowd around the still figures has grown larger, its ranks swollen by shoppers and strollers. Suddenly the characters come alive, producing a cacophony of sound on their various instruments, and thread their way through the throngs on the narrow street, trailed by the curious onlookers who have joined their parade.

In Place Taschereau more people are waiting, filling the benches and the steps beneath the statue of the silent bishop. The spectators who have followed the entertainers find vantage points in the square and the spectacle begins.

There are two images during the performance which always garner spontaneous clapping, and the crowd in Place Taschereau is no different from audiences in the rest of the country. The tall figure



Terry Hunter (Drum Mother).

Chris Randle



Pamela Harris (Bird Sorceress).

on stilts picking up the shorter stilt figure and the appearance, from beneath the skirts of Drum Mother, of the actress who portrays Bird Sorceress earn applause and gasps of wonder.

At the end of the performance the four characters parade back to Parc Montmorency, while stage manager Yaspar Gottlieb picks up the costume of Bird Sorceress. He is immediately surrounded by members of the audience, who besiege him with questions.

Among the other street artists at *Québec d'Été*, Festival Characters is unique. It is easy to define clowns, jugglers, dancers and musicians, but it is more difficult to explain the concept behind this group from Vancouver. The relationship to its illustrious ancestor in street theatre, the *commedia dell'arte*, is quite marked. In traditional *commedia*, a performer perfected one character, which enabled him to take that persona into any situation. Similarly, the four members of Festival Characters have worked on their creations independently and then hammered out the scenario for their performance.

Where Festival Characters differs from the *commedia*, however, is that their personas are completely original and their performance scenario is more serious and abstract. Terry Hunter, one of the group's founders, explains: "In North America we have lost our sense of archetypes; our myths are dying. Instead we are creating new clichés, such as the Valley Girl or the Swinging Single. But running through all of us, in our collective consciousness, is a common stream of symbols. By adapting these symbols, recognizable to all, we can supersede the rational world, and audiences can relate to our themes, no matter what their background. Yet our scenario is

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seives from their inhibitions. During the performance these diverse characters, by use of gesture, vocal sound and instruments, weave intricate images of love, hate, fear, kindness, conflict, terror, rebirth and harmony—in short, they touch on the basic fabric of human existence.

The untitled work is also a reflection of the western roots (British Columbia, Alberta, Oklahoma and Saskatchewan) of the performers, radiating a strong connection with earth and space, and an innocence seemingly untouched by urban cynicism.

Harris and Fowler previously worked together in Vancouver in the 12th Avenue Theatre, a company they had

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Pamela Harris (Bird Sorceress).

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vague enough that they can impose their own interpretation."

Each figure in Festival Characters appears to have one dominant personality trait. Hunter's Drum Mother, although a strong presence, represents matriarchal benevolence and conciliation, while Richard Fowler's Ama, a towering figure on stilts, in flowing white robes, is the quintessence of power in all its forms. The persona created by Savannah Walling is also a character on stilts, yet its presence, rather than being imposing, expresses a mixture of compassion and vulnerability. The fourth character, Pamela Harris' winged Bird Sorceress, is—as the name suggests—endowed with magical qualities.

As dictated by the necessities of street theatre, the characters are larger than life, but they are not puppets devoid of the human element. By putting themselves within elaborately costumed characters, the performers have pushed beyond their own physical limitations, as well as liberating themselves from their inhibitions. During the performance these diverse characters, by use of gesture, vocal sound and instruments, weave intricate images of love, hate, fear, kindness, conflict, terror, rebirth and harmony—in short, they touch on the basic fabric of human existence.

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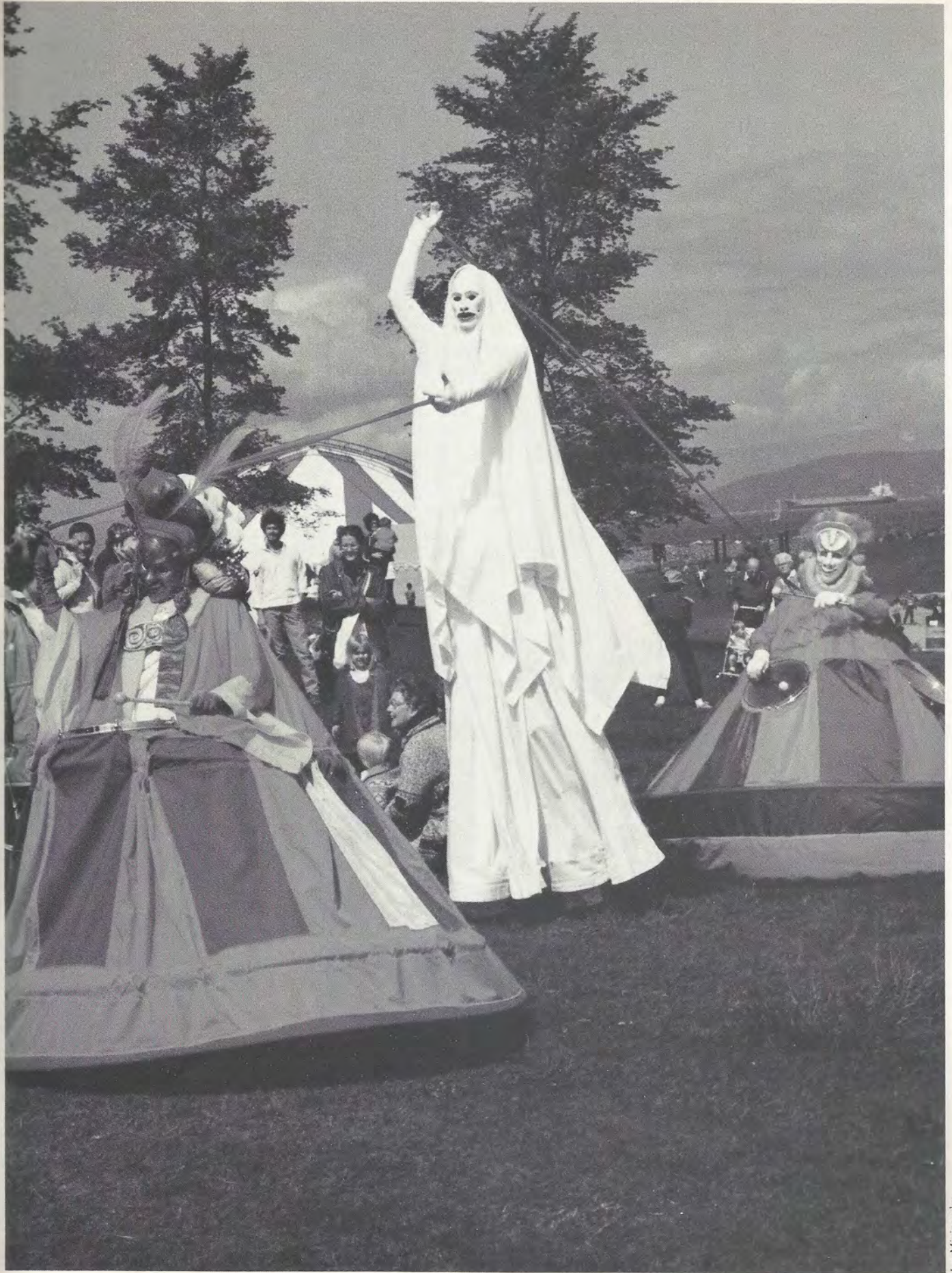
Harris and Fowler previously worked together in Vancouver in the 12th Avenue Theatre, a company they had

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Ian Migrovsky

Savannah Walling (Sundrum), Richard Fowler (Ama) and Terry Hunter (Drum Mother).



Ian Migicovsky

Savannah Walling (Sundrum), Richard Fowler (Ama) and Terry Hunter (Drum Mother).

founded, which was based on the principles of psycho-physical training for actors, as exemplified by the work of Polish director Jerzy Grotowski. Each had also studied with Eugenio Barba of the Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium in Denmark, who had placed the Grotowski training into a narrative and anthropological setting by linking it to character. (Fowler, in fact, is a member of Barba's company and spends most of the year in Denmark.)

The actors had met dancers Hunter and Walling, two of the co-founders of Terminal City, during workshops given in Vancouver by such notable Grotowski and Barba adherents as Yurik Bogaiovitch and Andre Gregory. Hunter had also taken additional training at Nordisk in Denmark.

Harris explains the formation of Festival Characters: "Richard and I had independently been working on characters in Europe and found ourselves back in Vancouver at the same time. We then found that Terry had created a character and had booked appearances at various festivals across the country. It was mutually agreed that we would work together in a joint performance."

During the first year Walling joined the group and created a character but, because she felt that her figure was too closely linked to Hunter's, over the past winter she developed one which was uniquely her own.

Although the four performers were brought together because of their collective interest in communicating with an audience in ways different from traditional Western dance or theatre, they also had individual reasons for collaborating on Festival Characters.

In Terry Hunter's case it was a desire to extend the bounda-

ries of culture, coupled with the wish to bring people closer together in a time of increasing polarization. "There was a need on my part to find work that speaks to all people. Culture can bypass political and economic boundaries, reach beyond the world's walls and form a connection between us. We are living in the age of annihilation, and culture is one of the vehicles we can use to reach out to each other. It is my grain of sand to try and bring humanity together.

"As well, I have always had an interest in working with other artistic elements and have an openness to expand the definition of what I was doing. It is important to break down the barriers between artistic areas as well as the barriers between societies."

For Savannah Walling the group broadened the scope of her craft. "I was tired of doing esoteric dance in small, dark places for elite people. Dance was limiting my abilities to develop as a performer, and I believe that traditional dance is suffering by cutting off possible avenues of approach. To stick to your traditional or classical training is suffocating.

"Working in Festival Characters has been a real break for me, and fusion theatre seemed like a natural progression. I had studied music as a child and my first professional interest was theatre. Dance came later, but I have always incorporated different elements into my choreography, such as myth and imagery. I also have a degree in anthropology, and both Terry and I have extensive training in mime. Developing a character was an emotional unfolding for me and working with theatre people like Pam and Richard helped enrich my role."

Pamela Harris, on the other hand, saw Festival Characters



Terry Hunter (Drum Mother) at Place Taschereau, Quebec City.



Paula Cirron

(Left to right) Richard Fowler, Savannah Walling, Terry Hunter and Pamela Harris in Quebec City.

as a chance to put theatrical principles to work. "When I studied with Barba, I was blown away with street theatre and what could be done with it. I want to see it happen here in Canada—both the movement out to the people and the fusing of the art forms. I came back from Europe with a character and a desire to work with others; I was lucky to find people with the same interest. My future did not lie in working with linear, narrative theatre; I hadn't worked in it for a long time, because actresses like me don't get hired by conventional theatres."

The member of the group most experienced in working with this type of street theatre is Richard Fowler and, for him, Festival Characters was a chance to take his character into a new situation. "First of all there is the need in me to create original work, because I have never followed the dictates of pragmatism or looked for security in the marketplace. I need to do this more than I need to get rich."

The purpose behind Festival Characters is, therefore, more than the performance of street theatre; it is also an attempt to fuse the various art forms and incorporate the principles underlying other cultures. Hunter explains: "Participatory community celebrations and the fusion of dance, music and theatre are characteristics of non-Western cultures. In Canada, Western thought has emphasized audience separation from the performer via the proscenium stage and the concept that the arts are distinct elements. It is also an indoor culture; yet in the past people celebrated outdoors and all ages mixed to-

gether. For example, the Chinese lion dance contains a symbolic figure related to by the whole community and is performed in the streets. Festival Characters is a return to that concept—we have created a syncretic form of culture. We believe that dance, music and theatre are elements of one art—the art of performance."

Harris adds: "We are two dancers and two actors who were trained in two separate disciplines. Yet Festival Characters has made us one, blurring the differences between us."

Another philosophical underpinning of Festival Characters is what Fowler refers to as "sending shock waves through reality"—both for the actor, in his training process, and the audience, during the viewing of the performance—by creating a climate of insecurity.

"When you are insecure, every action becomes important," says Hunter. "You must be open, because there are no rules. You have to forget what you know so you can learn. This is a state of shock."

For audience members, it means upsetting their usual sense of perception. "People respond to us in great extremes," adds Fowler. "The logic of our performance may not be familiar, yet the concept will work internally. Audiences are conditioned by television and linear theatre to expect the known, but our art form does not give them that security. We take people by surprise."

Eugenio Barba and his International School of Theatrical Anthropology would appear to be the most important influ-

ence governing Festival Characters. The school, which is part of Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium, concentrates on performance training which can be learned from other cultures. In one of his most successful projects, according to Hunter, Barba brought together 50 Occidentals with 25 Orientals from Bali, China, India and Japan to learn the principles behind Eastern dance, movement and theatre, including the use of reality, space, eye focus and composition.

Although the thrust of Barba's experiment was to train the Westerners in Eastern technique, there was never an intention to turn them into performing clones. Hunter explains: "I am fascinated by the percussion in ritual art, particularly the drumming of Ghana—which is fantastic. However, if I learn a Ghanaian dance and come back to Canada with the routine, what could I do with it? I can't perform it, because the dance is not my cultural background. However, if I learn the basis of thought behind the technique, rather than the technique *per se*—such as the intricate rules governing the putting-together of rhythm patterns—I can absorb this into my own work and be enriched by the experience."

The training process, as espoused by Barba, Grotowski and others, strips away at the barriers individuals have created around themselves, exposing the true character beneath, by the use of negatives. The trainee is taught how to "see", as opposed to how to "look". The method concentrates on "truth".

The West has always been fascinated by the culture of the Orient, particularly the intense concentration, the high degree of discipline, the rigorous physical training and the communicative power of gesture which Eastern performers exhibit, and it is these principles which Barba has incorporated into his school. Fowler explains further: "Orientals developed codified movement and behaviour systems which create presence in performance, such as the training methods found in Noh or Kathakali, for example. The West went through a similar process in codifying the vocabulary of ballet. Western theatre, however, has tended to reproduce daily life on the stage and this has led to banality and cliché. Just look at television.

"Barba's training, on the other hand, leads to surprise and exploration. He believes that specialization is weakness—because it limits you—while exposure to other cultures teaches you how to learn."

Training emphasizes the needs of the individual, and each actor develops a unique program. Hunter described the process in a report to the Canada Council, following his visit to Denmark: "I saw a wide variety of exercises taken from a number of sources including yoga, gymnastics, corporal mime, aerobatics, tai-chi, karate, modern dance, Balinese dance, contact improvisation, Feldenkrist [sic], speech and vocal work, work with props such as sticks and swords . . . The exercises are then developed into a stream and gradually, the trainee creates an alphabet of movement, developing a unique technique based on the other techniques the individual has absorbed." (It is also important to note that the drill is set and the exercises, like the letters in the alphabet, are in a rigid order.)

The trainee then moves on to improvisation, using the same alphabet of exercises and following the same principles of flow, constant direction change, outward eye focus and use of stops. Thus, new and fresh combinations are created. As Fowler points out, the alphabet is used to generate a never-ending series of new sentences and paragraphs. At any time in the process, new and different art forms and cultures may be

introduced to increase the repertoire of the alphabet.

The trainee also develops his own unique character, which Hunter describes as "a cultural hodgepodge of images", and the result, either individually or collectively, is "a powerful movement vocabulary supported by performer-produced music and character delineation made clear by use of props and costumes."

On a wider level, group performances do not take the narrative form, but become what Fowler refers to as "a series of associations". He adds: "When you can't develop your material any further, the character is finished."

When the four members of Festival Characters brought their creations to rehearsal, they were curious to see where the collaboration would lead. Initially they concentrated on spacial relationships, attempted to find ways of merging their set gestures and explored what physical activities the characters could perform—for example, if one person on stilts was able to pick up another performer without losing balance.

During the second year Harris and Fowler brought forth a list of common mythological themes such as birth, death, victory and defeat, and the improvisations developed material related to them. Walling explains: "We didn't use human logic, such as 'Let's do this or that'. Instead, we moved by intuition and our characters found an internal logic of events."

Because of the existing individual routines, the material for the group performance was, as Fowler points out, already in existence. The improvisational process showed them how to put the four characters together by finding the organic thoughtline based on associations, rather than concrete ideas. "It is a serendipitous process, where one profits by accidents," explains Fowler. "As long as reactions and interactions are clear, whatever interpretation an audience gives to our performance is valid. Our narrative ambiguities become strengths because we work with archetypes and universals which draw in the audience."

Improvisations, however, are confined to the rehearsal process; 95 per cent of the performance is set, with only the initial awakening and parade through the streets allowing spontaneity. "We are bringing professionalism to street theatre," declares Fowler.

Although the main thrust of the group is performance, there is also a political aspect behind Festival Characters. "It's the whole notion of 'awakening'," states Hunter. "Artists can touch people when something inside them has become dull or deadened. The *shaman*, or witch doctor, performs this task in other societies; artists must do this in our society. We don't want people just gawking at us; we want them to reach deeper." And Walling adds: "I'd be very unhappy if I thought that people were taking us as mere spectacle."

Thus, using the tool of larger-than-life archetypes, Festival Characters has attempted to cross cultural boundaries by evoking the universal images found in the rituals, celebrations and pageantry of societies throughout the world. "We're so traditional," says Walling, "that we're unfamiliar."

Festival Characters always ends with what Yaspar Gottlieb calls "the performance that the performers never see". People besiege him with questions such as What is it about? This is what I think it means, am I right? Is it a legend? Are they men or women?—to which he gives concrete replies to queries about the group and oblique ones to those concerning content.

Nonetheless, Gottlieb never tires of watching the performance, although he has seen it countless times, because each new location and audience give Festival Characters a perpetual freshness. ●

Eugenio Barba and Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium

Nordisk's director, Eugenio Barba (an Italian by birth), received degrees in the history of religion and theatre in Oslo. After graduating in 1959, Barba spent three years studying at the Warsaw State School under Jerzy Grotowski. While he introduced Grotowski to religious-oriented theatre such as Kathakali, in turn Barba learned the Polish master's revolutionary method for actors' training.

Upon his return to Norway, Barba's training and philosophy were dismissed and he was unable to find work in Norway's national theatre school. Instead he gathered together other failed aspirants to form the Odin Teater, based on a fusion of Grotowski's training method and Barba's extension of it.

During a tour to Denmark in 1964 the group acquired a fanatical supporter in Inger Lendsted, who saw an Odin performance while visiting her parents in the small Jutland farming community of Holstebro. Lendsted convinced the town of 15,000 to offer the Odin a home, as they were receiving no assistance in Norway. She had been dazzled by the Odin's innovative approach to theatre, and was determined to save the group from collapse.

Barba and company moved to a farm provided by the town, and Holstebro has supported the group by means of yearly subsidies ever since. That this occurred in the early '60s, in a Danish backwater, when the West was just beginning to explore experimental theatre, is astonishing. The town, however, has been paid back handsomely for its loyalty—Holstebro has become a mecca for artists around the world.

As well, the Odin has influenced other groups in Europe and South America, forming a network of Barba acolytes. It is one of the leading lights in the international theatre community.

The Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium is the umbrella group for five different sections: the Odin theatre company, which is its performance wing; the International School of Theatre Anthropology, which offers training and research in transcultural performance elements; and three sections for individual explorations, one of which is Richard Fowler's *Canada Project*.

A unique concept developed by Nordisk is the "barter system", which involves the Odin giving performances of their work in exchange for return performances by people of local cultures throughout the world. For example, in 1978 all the Odin performers went to different countries—Denmark, Italy, Brazil, Bali and Japan—and created a production called *The Million*, which was an amalgam of the different cultural traditions to which they had been exposed.

As Terry Hunter wrote in his journal, after seeing a performance of *The Million*: "What these people are doing is going beyond the normal world of everyday reality, the world of characters which make up so much of our plays. They travel into the world of dreams and the unconscious—the realm of symbols and archetypes which propel our activities, concerns, needs and desires . . . [using] imagination and creativity, they strike emotional and intellectual chords which resonate on profound universal levels. This is what takes them into contact with other cultures, for they have gone beyond the superficial shell which sets us apart from each other . . . and have found a stream which runs through all humankind."



Richard Fowler (Ama) in action.

Paula Citron

Street Theatre: Flexibility is the Key

Flexibility is the key to street theatre, and for Festival Characters it means adapting to different terrains which have been painstakingly mapped out by the artists during rehearsal, both for the parade route and actual performance. Nonetheless, even the best planning can come to naught—as the group discovered during one nightmare afternoon in Quebec City. Not only did their parade route have to be instantaneously changed, due to a conflict with the starting time of another group, but when they arrived on the Dufferin Terrace—the site specified for their performance—they found a performance already in progress, which meant heading for open space elsewhere.

Outdoor summer theatre can produce physical discomforts as well, particularly the heat, which stifles performers encased in heavy costumes and masks.

The masks also limit vision. During both parade and performance, stage manager Gottlieb must be vigilant that children do not run close to the stilts, or a serious accident might occur. As Fowler says, "I weigh 175 pounds and could do a lot of damage falling from a height." Fowler, who is in the most precarious position on his six-foot stilts, is particularly susceptible to high winds, which cause his flowing robes to cover his face. This can affect not only breathing, but also balance, because Fowler's focus, when on stilts, is the horizon.

The reaction of the crowd can never be predicted. The performers have noticed that outdoor theatre can bring out aggression, particularly in children and adolescents, who have been known to torment the characters. Fowler has even had a beer bottle rolled at him to try and make him fall. "They are testing the unknown," he explains.

In the final analysis, street theatre can be summed up with one word: risk. As Fowler says, "We are the unexpected and the unknown in the banal world. In a way the audience is threatened, because reality is not what it seems and, for the most part, they don't know how to react to us."

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Jeanne Robinson:

A Passion for Dance



Greg McKinnon

by Pamela Anthony

When I first came to Halifax in 1979," says Jeanne Robinson, "I knew that I wanted to get a company going, a professional modern dance company. I also realized that it might be a very long-term commitment, and that it might take the rest of my life."

She beat her deadline: today, in its third year of existence, Robinson's Nova Dance Theatre is thriving. Six dancers are on regular salary; the repertoire is substantial and growing; houses of 80 per cent or better are standard. From its earliest days the company has enjoyed the committed support of its board of directors, the community and the provincial government.

Perhaps the key word for Nova Dance Theatre—and for its

artistic director—is synthesis. New York choreographer Beverly Brown, currently guest artist-in-residence with NDT, says, "I think that's one of Jeanne's greatest strengths: that she can pull together all the disparate elements necessary to keep a company alive in a comparatively remote place."

As its name indicates, Nova Dance Theatre itself is intended as a synthesis. "I wanted," says Robinson, "a company which could marry the best aspects of dance and of theatre, and I wanted to base it on the repertoire system."

Brown observes: "She has built a repertoire with a good sense of variety and balance—not just a mix, but a *blend*, using her own choreographic images and those of other local choreographers like Francine Boucher, and also bringing in

people like myself and Jennifer Mascall and Barbara Dille to introduce new movement styles to the company."

Perhaps this is why the Nova Scotia Department of Culture, Recreation and Fitness has been supportive of Nova Dance Theatre since its infancy: it offers maximum value for their dance dollar. "Thanks in large part to Michael Ardenne," says Robinson, "the Department's support—financial and otherwise—has grown as the company has grown, and we're optimistic for the future."

Robinson herself is a synthesis of disparate elements. Born in Boston, she has lived in Nova Scotia for 12 of her 36 years. She has been married to writer Spider Robinson for nine years, and has a daughter, Luanna. She is a past member of the board of directors of the Dance in Canada Association. A recipient of five individual Canada Council grants, she has also received the Hugo and Nebula awards for her collaboration on the novel *Stardance*. "Just keeping her resumé up-to-date is a full-time job," claims company manager Dianne Milligan.

Robinson's artistic background is equally eclectic. She studied dance at the Boston Conservatory, the Martha Graham and Erick Hawkins schools, Toronto Dance Theatre and the Nikolais/Louis Dance Theater Lab, among others. Her curriculum vitae also shows that she studied drama while at the Conservatory and with Sanford Meisner at the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York, and did a season of summer stock in Connecticut.

In 1980 she studied with Beverly Brown in New York and at the American Dance Festival, and in the fall of 1981 was invited to perform with Beverly Brown Dancensemble at the prestigious Riverside Dance Festival. "Dancing in New York was one of the emotional high points of my career," says Robinson.

The motif of synthesis persists in her choreography, as noted in a review—published in *Dance in Canada*—of one of her early works: "*Elsewhen* took traditional, regional ingredients—and infused them with a modern sensibility, blended them into a dance fantasy which spoke to city, mountain and prairie alike."

Robinson's fondness for multiple viewpoints carries over into the company itself. All members are encouraged and expected to provide feedback and input on choreography-in-progress. She explains: "I selected them in the first place for their diversity of individual strengths and their ability to think, as much as for their technique. I need people who share my passion for dance, with whom I can share an ongoing creative dialogue. They have to have a broad base of technique and be versatile enough to continually shift into different movement vocabularies—any one of them is capable of holding the stage alone."

"I make the final decisions, of course—in the end the responsibility for a cohesive final product is mine—but I like to think of myself as a responsive tyrant."

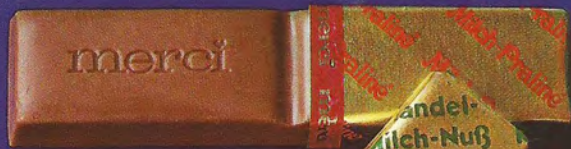
"Jeanne values our opinions," says company veteran



Members of Nova Dance Theatre in Jennifer Mascall's *House Pets*. (Left to right) Jeanne Robinson, Louise Hoyt, Christiane Miron, Cliff Lejeune, André Fairfield.



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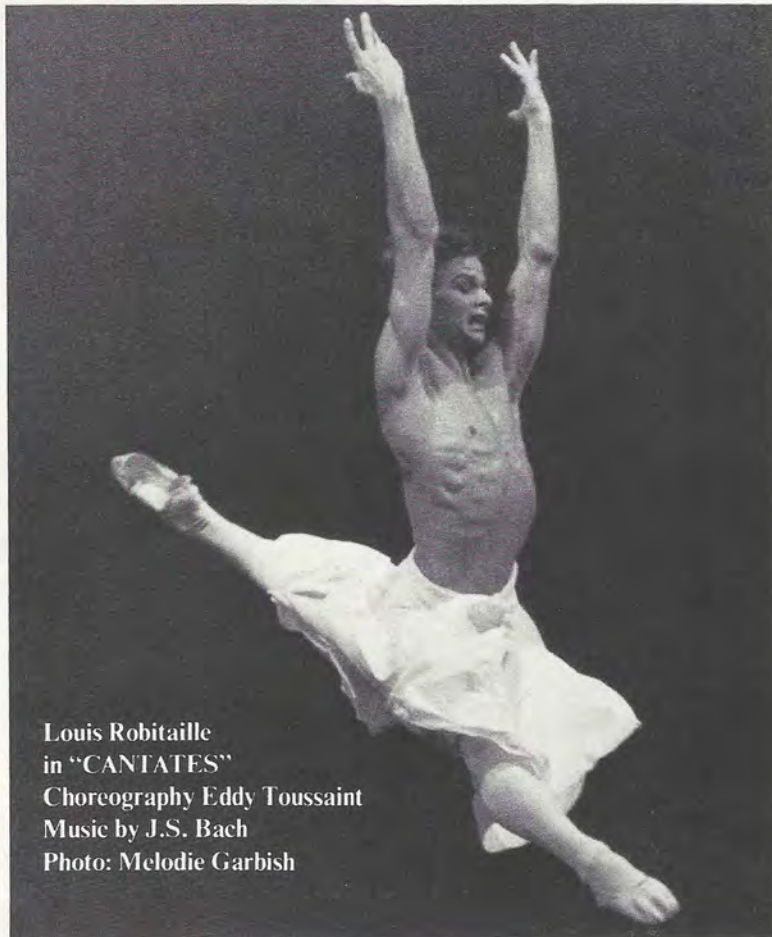
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Bruce Dienes

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

Louise Hoyt, "and that makes it fun to come to work. Last June she gave each of us the opportunity to choreograph for an in-studio performance series."

Beverly Brown noted the effect of this approach when she returned to Halifax this year for her second residency with Nova Dance Theatre: "I walked into the studio for the first time since 1981, on the first day after summer vacation, to find a family reunion: a group of dancers who are familiar, accustomed to working with one another. Even Leica Hardy, the newest member, didn't seem like a new member. The group integrated her instantly."

This, despite the diversity of the dancers' origins. Cliff LeJeune, like Hoyt, is a Halifax native; Hardy comes from Toronto; and Christiane Miron and André Fairfield hail from Montreal and Ottawa.

Full-time company manager Dianne Milligan completes the Nova Dance Theatre organization. An experienced arts administrator, she has developed the solid, ongoing structure without which any dance company would fail.

"With such a firm foundation," says Robinson, "I'm freed to do what I love most in life: to improvise, to jam, to let my muscles speak and let the dance boil out of me—then play back the video and see what worked.

"Each work demands its own movement vocabulary, its own design. That's why I've integrated as many different kinds and styles of movement as possible into my own body

and those of my dancers, so that when we're in the studio and that magic moment of creation comes, we have the maximum number of tools with which to build."


While Robinson's audiences never know what to expect when they walk into the theatre—she delights in challenging them—nonetheless, they do not need to check their programs to know which pieces are hers. Certain elements persist, no matter what the theme or style: wry humour, warmth, quiet spirituality, compassion for human foibles, ingrained optimism and a determination to communicate at all costs.

"I never worry about audiences here," she maintains. "I do what interests and challenges me. I create dances for thinking and feeling people, and the response has been strong enough to keep me in business. I'm glad that my work is entertaining, but it's not entertainment, *period*. If I've done my job right, the audience understands—they see and hear and feel what the dance is about.

"Reaching an audience on a visceral level has always been easy for me, but it's only in the last few years that I've started to be satisfied with the *crafting* of the work, the technical underpinnings. I hope I can continue to grow at the same rate for the *next* five years.

"I'll be the first to admit that there are days—quite a few days—when I wish I'd gotten into some simpler, less demanding profession, like particle physics or air traffic control. But in the end it's the work itself that sustains me; it's the work that really matters." ●





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Dance at the National Arts Centre: New Ambitions, New Directions

by Hilary McLaughlin

Almost five years ago, in an interview for *Dance in Canada* ("Lost Dreams", Issue 18), Donald MacSween, Director-General of Ottawa's National Arts Centre, said rather sadly, "We are not known as a dance location." He was discussing the implications of cutbacks in federal spending upon the arts in general, the National Arts Centre in particular and dance specifically. "Once you get radical cuts . . . something has to give. Dance will be cut back."

This past summer—ironically, as the Centre's prestigious, celebrated (and expensive) opera production season was suspended indefinitely—his mood had changed: dance has become one of the brightest lights in the Centre's future. Not long after those earlier cutbacks the NAC embarked, at first tentatively, then with growing confidence, upon a dance subscription series which has made it the major presenter of dance in Canada.

"The gala was the turning point," says MacSween, referring to the Canadian Dance Spectacular of 1981. The event, initiated by CAPDO (Canadian Association of Professional Dance Organizations), brought eight major ballet and modern dance companies to one stage, in one evening, for the first time. A film was made of the event, the world press converged and, in MacSween's view, a critical corner was turned "in community attitude, staff interest, the heightening of consciousness. In the Ottawa public it was realized that dance was worth more attention."

Incontestably, the high profile attached to the Spectacular was a boon to awareness of and interest in dance programming in Ottawa, and at the Arts Centre, but I suspect MacSween underestimates the extent to which the Spectacular was a culmination, rather than a beginning.

In 1979 Dance Administrator Ted Demetre had risked squeaking a lengthy booking by the Feld Ballet into a ballet



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Lois Greenfield

The Feld Ballet in *Play Bach*, choreographed by Eliot Feld.

subscription series otherwise composed of the three major Canadian companies. It started shakily, but by the end of the run was an astonishing success. Thus encouraged, the Arts Centre began to wander ever-wider in search of programs to expand its subscription series, and by this season seems to have achieved the pinnacle of confidence.

All the while, the NAC had presented dance off-subscription. As a federally funded Crown corporation, its obligations went beyond fiscal responsibility and good, varied shows for its Ottawa audience: after all, the National Arts Centre is the nation's theatre, and its commitments included making its stages available to Canadian companies. As

a result, from time to time many regional modern dance companies and smaller chamber ballet groups, as well as independents and less-easily defined artists found themselves on one of the Centre's stages. Modern dance attracted small and dedicated audiences, while attractions such as The National Tap Dance Company's production of *The Tin Soldier* could reach a non-dance audience.

But the NAC went one further and began to present modern companies on subscription. In the early seasons of this venture spokesmen admitted that exclusively modern series were a tougher sell than ballet series, or those which mixed the two; and non-subscription sales for ballet were always



Margie Gillis in *Third World Dream*.

easier than modern. But that is hardly unique to Ottawa, or the Arts Centre; and there is no doubt that—whether as a result of vigorous and well-focused marketing, or as a result of the raised consciousness to which MacSween refers—a modern presentation is less risky now than in the past.

The 1982 Dance in Canada Conference was held in Ottawa, and the Arts Centre was a committed participant at every turn. Apart from hosting the opening banquet and reception, and some of the more ambitious evenings of Canadian dance available in town in recent years, the Centre's dance staff aided the Association's organizers in everything from publicity to logistics.

This past summer Le Groupe de la Place Royale and Theatre Ballet co-operated on a "Dance Week" in Ottawa. When their representatives approached the NAC to see if they could use space there for one of the events, they met with enthusiasm and support for the entire venture.

One question in the early days had been whether dance would follow music and theatre in that the National Arts Centre would become a production house—in effect, whether there would ever be a resident company. Five years ago, without denying the attractiveness of such a proposition, MacSween essentially said "No way." Now he sees it—still in the future—more positively. "A company the size of Theatre Ballet," he muses. "Twelve to 15—along the lines of the old British Ballet For All, touring . . ."

A cavil against dance in the tough years was that theatre and music were produced in-house, while dance was imported from across the country and abroad. The Centre was criticized, perhaps unfairly, for being "merely" a presenter of dance. It is no mean feat, however, that Ted Demetre has established a good reputation for the Arts Centre as a dance location, getting it put "on the tour", often when Toronto and Montreal are not scheduled. (The Feld Ballet, for instance, has been at the NAC, but never in Toronto or Montreal.)

From that base the National Arts Centre has now expanded the scope of the Dance and Variety Department. Last year saw the appointment of Yvan Sain tonge to the newly created position of Producer, Dance, Variety and Special Events.

"Ted knows the New York and London scene. Yvan brings more knowledge of continental Europe," says MacSween. Sain tonge had worked in Europe for several years as a cultural attaché for External Affairs. In that capacity he saw not only the new movements in European dance, but many companies from points east that had not yet reached North America. His knowledge of the contemporary scene in Europe is staggering.

As is his comfort with the work in French Canada. Although the Centre had always presented a reasonable proportion of ballet and modern dance from Quebec, one of Sain tonge's first ventures as a producer was a Montreal dance



Sankai Juku in a scene from *Kinkan Shonen*.

series, apart from the main subscription series.

"They said 'You'll kill yourself' when I proposed it," he recollected with a chuckle. But "they" were wrong. The series, which included Daniel Léveillé, Paul-André Fortier and Margie Gillis, was a great success. And the success has prompted Saintonge to consider similar series drawing in companies and artists from other cities for focal attention. "Vancouver, Toronto, New York, Paris," he promises.

His plans, like his energies, are boundless. "We'll have exhibitions. We'll develop more TV broadcasting from the Centre. I have ideas for shows in the Café—I want to use every inch of the Centre. The NAC is not only three halls—there are restaurants, the Salon, the terraces . . ."

With the smallest team of staff at the NAC—"seven very good people"—Saintonge envisages "noon-hour conferences during the season, interviews or performances at lunchtime. I'd like to organize something from here for Expo '86 in Vancouver."

His own job description? He loves it for its scope: "I do everything that Music and Theatre don't do."

As well as jumping straight into the fray of immediate programming, Saintonge has well-reasoned planning strategies. "We need an artistic direction in dance. We have to know who our audience is, know where dance is, and build slowly. One aspect is what is already known, but what about the new—what is being prepared in Canada and abroad? Will our audiences be ready to see them? I need to know what audience we have, and what audience we miss.

"I think it is very important to build the off-subscription programming—there is where we will find our new audience, the people who might not come to the Opera. Our three theatres can be a way of telling us what to do. In the Studio we can present the avant-garde, what is in progress at the moment. In the Theatre, more contemporary work, which might be established within the next two years. In the Opera you see what is recognized. Or, in reverse: the recognized, the about-to-be-recognized, what might-be-recognized. The people in the Studio are part of the decision."

Saintonge is artistically fearless. Although it couldn't be arranged, he tried to get Pina Bausch to participate in summer



Jack Vartoogian

The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre is scheduled to appear at the National Arts Centre in February 1985—the company's only Canadian appearance this season.

activities at the Centre after her engagement at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles. And Saintonge himself knows that an Ottawa audience doesn't exactly put itself out on a limb artistically. "Pilobolus—well, they didn't fill the house on their first engagement, which was two nights. The second time—100 per cent." On the other hand, he snapped up Japan's unusual troupe Sankai Juku on their first major venture into North America this year, and saw it receive critical raves and leave audiences breathless.

Ottawa is coming along nicely—a product, in part, of the valiant struggle of the NAC's Dance Department to keep dance alive, under severe constraint, through the lean years. And few would exchange, with respect, a resident company "the size of Theatre Ballet" for a chance to see Sankai Juku, Pina Bausch and other exciting imports such as the Cullberg Ballet, or this season's debut performance by Chicago's Hubbard Street Dance Company.

Both MacSween and Saintonge recognize that the Arts Centre did not accomplish a warmer climate for dance entirely on its own. "It began when Le Groupe de la Place Royale moved up to Ottawa," recalls MacSween. He also credits the presence, for the last decade, of Celia Franca in Ottawa. (She is to be honoured this fall, at the National Arts Centre, for her contribution to Ottawa dance.) And he acknowledges the limitless support of local angels like Adele Deacon and Diana Kirkwood, energetic "hands-on" promoters of the cause of dance.

Saintonge is happy to admit that his Montreal dance series may have had its way to success paved, in part, by Le Groupe de la Place Royale—presenters, for years, of other, "Not the Saturday Night at the Opera" dancers and companies. They were first with Léveillé, Gillis, Fortier, Terrill Maguire, Lily Eng, Terminal City, Dancemakers and many others, some of whom have since reached the Arts Centre.

Saintonge's ambitions include one grand one: "Someday a company will be described by 'They made Ottawa'—in the same way you now say 'They've played New York'—I want companies and artists to look at their bookings and say 'But we have to get to Ottawa.'"

It can happen. Saintonge plans to exploit the compatibility of dance and video; he looks around his stunning facility, in which any size and shape of dance can be produced and performed (and at more than the standard hours); he looks around the world and sees a company he wants to bring to the NAC. He is not afraid of controversy, as when half the NAC Opera audience walked out on the Bremen Dance Theatre's *Callas* last season. "I want people to phone me and ask me to resign! I want to create discussion."

The very things which militated against a hasty flourishing of dance activity in the early years at the National Arts Centre—caution, thrift, conservatism—have served dance very well in the longer run. Federal commitment to the Arts Centre is always going to play a major role in the flexibility of the NAC's plans and development; but, as every individual or group who has ever had to go, cap-in-hand, to any funding source well knows, the building of an audience is major testimony on behalf of the plaintiff.

The exigencies remain, and could grow; but a survival mentality is second nature at the Centre, and it seems likely that the National Arts Centre will remain the best showcase for dance in this country in the foreseeable future.

It has been hard won and it is, for those who won it, a richly deserved victory. And, of course, the fruits of the victory are ours—the dance audience of Canada. ●



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Dance in Saskatchewan

Moving Forward into the Spotlight

by Diane Sather and Cathy Bond-Tabb

Dance in Saskatchewan? Yes, Saskatchewan—the province that dancers once bypassed on their way to centres of greater interest. Today Saskatchewan has one of the fastest growth rates for dance support of any province in Canada.

Dance in Saskatchewan is essentially community-based and is interwoven with the cultural and aesthetic values of the heritage from which it sprung.

The dance community consists primarily of teachers and students, with parental support and involvement. The objective has been development of dance opportunities to serve the needs of a geographically isolated dance community. All forms of dance have struggled to develop to a point where—in a constant effort to improve standards—festivals, competitions, examinations and related activities can be offered to students.

Professional companies, both classical and modern, have been formed in Saskatchewan. The companies are small, and the province has yet to prove itself as a base for professional companies, but Saskatchewan Theatre Ballet (the most recently established group) is persevering in its development.

Students from Saskatchewan are accepted into schools across Canada and abroad, and many dancers who began their studies in the province go on to study, perform and teach with national and international companies.

Throughout the province there are private dance schools, clubs and festivals offering opportunities for ballet, jazz, tap, modern and creative, ballroom, square, folk and round dancing. Ethnic dance groups abound.

The College of Physical Education at the University of Saskatchewan offers unique opportunities for dance studies. Extensive programs, for both teaching and performing, cover a multitude of dance forms and are taught by a faculty whose members are nationally and internationally recognized

teachers. The college also possesses a Kinesiology department that is a recognized leader in its field.

This varied, but continuous growth pattern spawned the concept of an organization to service and support the increasing needs of dance at a provincial level. Although involvement in dance was high, the wide variety and physical separation of dance communities demonstrated the necessity for a dance umbrella that could assist in specific areas of need. Thus, in 1979 Dance Saskatchewan was formed.

In its five years of existence Dance Saskatchewan Incorporated has achieved its aims and objectives and is constantly expanding its vision to include new goals. Dance Saskatchewan has grown from area representation to provincial servicing. Membership is open to anyone who is involved with or interested in dance.

Communication to link the various sections of the dance community is achieved through a frequently published provincial newsletter. Educational opportunities are provided through workshops with touring companies and provincial, national and international resource people. The needs of all areas (including dance therapy and programs for the handicapped) are serviced. Consumer and participant awareness of both quality and safety in dance is a constant objective.

The profile of dance has been heightened throughout the province. Dancers' studies are supported with awards and scholarship funds which are raised through volunteer efforts.

Within four years of the establishment of Dance Saskatchewan, dance support in the province had grown to the point where it could successfully host the 1983 national conference of the Dance in Canada Association.

This progress is the result of the efforts of a strong body of volunteers and the acquisition of funding. Having established its bylaws and attained recognized non-profit status, Dance Saskatchewan gained the invaluable support of the province's

cultural funding organizations. The cultural section of Saskatchewan Sports Trust provides the mainstay of Dance Saskatchewan's funding, with additional support coming from the Department of Culture and Recreation. With this support Dance Saskatchewan is able to maintain and staff an office in Saskatoon to serve its members.

Additional programs have been developed. A one-year dancer-in-residence position has been funded to expand dance support and opportunities in the city of Swift Current for 1984-85. Such a unique development, in a small population centre, could not have been accomplished without the support of the Department of Culture and Recreation.

Dance Saskatchewan is breaking new ground in its attempts to improve the province's dance scene, expanding its services to include an archival and written history of dance in Saskatchewan, based on an oral history project completed this past summer. Pioneers of many dance forms still reside in Saskatchewan, and this project will ensure that their contribution to the province's cultural heritage is not lost.

The designation of an annual Saskatchewan Dance Celebrity of the Year will begin this fall with a gala benefit ball and awards night. The efforts of the recipient will be appropriately acknowledged and preserved through the establishment of a scholarship, to be awarded annually.

The first annual provincial mini-conference, providing educational opportunities for those interested in dance, will take place in Saskatoon in October 1984. Canadian and American experts will present workshops on dance history, business management, dance injuries and therapy, audition and performance techniques, and nutrition and stress management.

These projects are all in addition to Dance Saskatchewan's workshop, communications, equipment, library and community services core program.

Dance has proved itself to be an integral part of the province's cultural heritage and Saskatchewan is now ready to step into the dance spotlight. ●

CORRECTION: Issue Number 39-Spring 1984

The final paragraph of the article "Making It Happen in Montreal: Tangente's Dena Davida", by Carol Libman, should read:

"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 possible 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."

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ting final touches on *Adagio Lamentoso*, the finale of the New York City Ballet's 1981 Tchaikovsky Festival.

A handful of photographs gives us the young Balanchine as performer in the West, while others show work in progress for the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo, the Hollywood films and the circus. The balance demonstrates his dedication to the company which was to become the New York City Ballet.

Gjon Mili, Martha Swope, Paul Kolnik and Steven Caras are among the photographers represented in depictions of the last 30 years. They show Balanchine in rehearsal with many of his celebrated charges. Coaching sessions with Mikhail Baryshnikov, in costume for *The Prodigal Son* and *Orpheus*,

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The Australian Ballet: Twenty-One Years

by Charles Lisner

University of Queensland Press, 1984

National identity is a big issue for ballet establishments in Commonwealth nations and, while in Canada we've come to terms with the matter by relaxing our preoccupation with its urgency, certain pioneers in Australian ballet, such as Charles Lisner, insist on keeping sight of an artistic goal which has become almost a moral obligation.

Trained in the '30s by former Ballet Russe member

Books in Review

by Leland Windreich



Martha Swope

George Balanchine

Portrait of Mr. B: Photographs of George Balanchine

with an essay by Lincoln Kirstein
 Viking Press (Penguin Books Canada, Ltd.), 1984

Paeans to George Balanchine continue to pour from the presses. This one offers 75 rare and fascinating photographs, beginning with one of the infant Georgi Melitonovitch in 1904. The concluding set shows the 79-year-old master putting final touches on *Adagio Lamentoso*, the finale of the New York City Ballet's 1981 Tchaikovsky Festival.

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are particularly poignant scenes of the master at work.

Peter Martins has written a thoughtful introduction. Lincoln Kirstein's essay deals mainly with Balanchine's religious beliefs, and how this Eastern Orthodoxy influenced his ballets in concept and content.

A reprint of Edwin Denby's "Three Sides of *Agon*" is a delightful bonus for readers of this welcome book.

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Trained in the '30s by former Ballet Russe member

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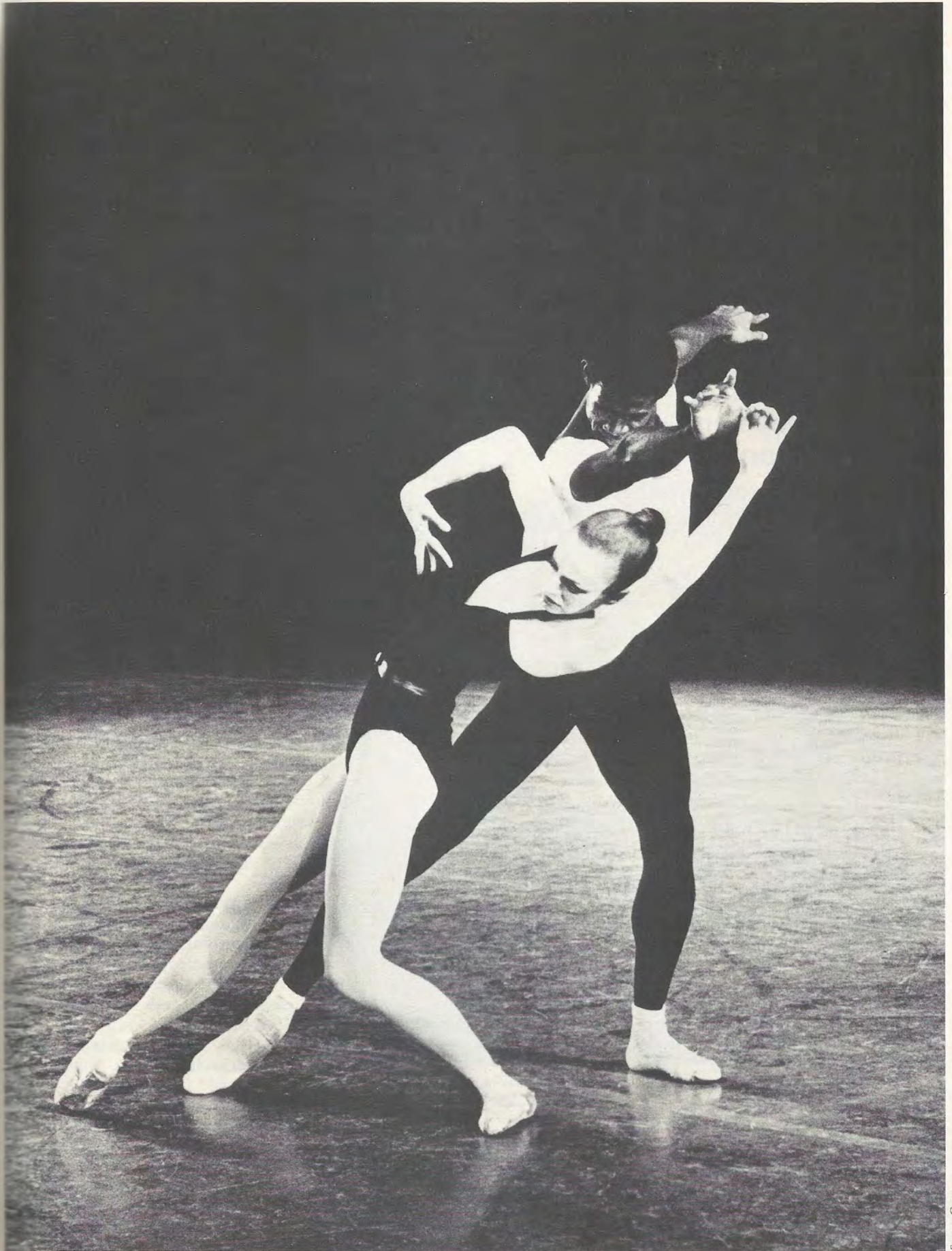
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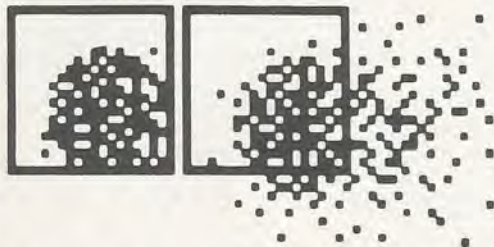
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Steven Caras

Heather Watts and Mel Tomlinson in Balanchine's masterpiece *Agon*, which is discussed in Edwin Denby's essay, "Three Sides of *Agon*" —reprinted in *Portrait of Mr. B.*

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Edouard Borovansky, Lisner founded the Queensland Ballet, one of four regional companies in Australia.

He makes no bones about his firm conviction that Australia could well become the centre of ballet creativity in generations ahead. Recipient of European and American largesse in the past 21 years, the Australian Ballet has already done splendidly. It has a repertoire containing all the popular 19th-century ballets, danced in mountings which the book's gorgeous photographs reveal to be appropriately lavish, as well as an impressive cross-section of important ballets from outstanding 20th-century choreographers. A roster of guest stars from abroad indicates that Australian audiences have been treated to performances by none but the best.

What bothers Lisner is that the wholly Australian collaborations which flourished early in the company's development are vanishing, replaced by "blockbuster" ballets. These are the instant classics, opera-house spectacles based on Viennese operettas and romances by Hugo and Dumas. As Australian audiences appear to adore this genre, arts councils and company management are leaving concern for indigenous ballet concepts in the hands of the regional companies, where sincerity and experimentation are less expensive.

In an interview with Lisner, Peggy van Praagh (who, with Robert Helpmann, co-directed the Australian Ballet from its inception until her retirement in 1974) reveals her personal disappointment over the company's neglect of what she considers the eleven "best ballets in the world".

Together van Praagh and Lisner paint a sad picture of the politics that confront dedicated artists, the difficulties of co-direction with conflicting viewpoints, the problems of dealing with philistines in government, the indifference of management to the rights and privileges of dancers, and the use of strike action to deal with frustration and despair.

Briefly:

Dover Publications offers two attractive volumes of dance photography, available in Canada through General Publishing Co. Daniel S. Sorine's *Stars of the Contemporary Ballet* (1983) comprises studio and rehearsal portraits of celebrated and lesser-known ballet luminaries. Among his favourite subjects are Karen Kain, Gelsey Kirkland, Natalia Makarova and Mikhail Baryshnikov, captured as touchingly vulnerable beings.

Fred Fehl's *Stars of the Ballet and Dance in Performance Photographs* (1984) is a veritable photographic history of dance in New York since 1940. Fehl did much of his work from the prompter's pit in major theatres, offering a panorama of significant performance shots of modern dance pioneers, Ballet Russe companies, ethnic groups on tour and visitors from Denmark, England and Russia.

Images of Show Business from the Theatre Museum, Victoria & Albert (Methuen, 1983) is a fascinating pictorial display which James Fowler has edited to herald the opening of London's Theatre Museum in Covent Garden. It is a pageant of the entertainment world, from classic theatre through rock performances, and is particularly rich in dance iconography.

Diana Theodores Taplin has assembled seven scholarly papers for *Dance Spectrum: Critical and Philosophical Enquiry* (Otium Publications, 1983). The studies are focused on issues of aesthetics and criticism, and primarily represent submissions at Dance in Canada meetings. The work of Canadian scholars dominates the collection, which includes treatises by Taplin, Rose Hill, Graham Jackson and Jamie Zagoudakis. ●

n.b. What's New And What's Happening . . . People, Performances and Exhibits.

Winnipeg-based choreographer **Stephanie Ballard**, a former winner of the Clifford E. Lee Choreography Award (1982), has been named winner of the 1984 Jean A. Chalmers Award in Choreography. She was presented with the award, which is administered by the Ontario Arts Council through the Floyd S. Chalmers Fund, at the Dance in Canada Conference held in Toronto in June. "The jury found Ms. Ballard's choreography mature and well-crafted, and praised its sensitive, open quality," remarked Susan Cohen, dance officer for the Ontario Arts Council. "As an artist, Stephanie Ballard is well in control of who and what she is working with—ready to plunge into a whole new world, choreographically."

Terry Hunter and **Savannah Walling**, artistic directors of Special Delivery, spent the autumn performing in Denmark. Their tour ended with a two-week residency at the Odin Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium in Holstebro. Following the tour, Terry Hunter was scheduled to travel to Zimbabwe to establish contact with local cultural organizations and performing groups.

Vancouver's **Mountain Dance Theatre** has announced the appointment of Raymond Garford to the position of general manager.

Following its inaugural performances in Vancouver, Judith Marcuse's **Reperatory Dance Company of Canada** embarks on its first national tour this fall. Dates include cities in British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec and Ontario. In November the company is scheduled for a 10-performance tour of the Caribbean.

Vancouver-based **EDAM** has announced the appointment of Geran Capewell as the company's new general manager.

Sun-Ergos returned to the Edinburgh Festival in August for the fifth year. Robert Greenwood and Dana Luebke were invited to be part of the festival-within-the-festival, *Dance Directions '84*.



Edmonton-based Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Ensemble is celebrating its 15th anniversary this fall with a cross-Canada tour which includes performances in Lethbridge, Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Regina and Saskatoon.

Their Edinburgh performances were followed by a tour of Scotland, Wales and England.

The **Alberta Ballet Company** has announced new company members:

Thomas Walker, formerly of Indianapolis Ballet Theatre; Jessica Manzo, from the professional program of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens; and Edmonton native David MacGillivray, who has been working in Eastern Canada.



Maria Formolo, co-founder with Keith Urban of Formolo and Urban Dance, will choreograph and perform in *Sun Moon Star* at the John L. Haar Theatre, Grant MacEwan Community College, in Edmonton at the end of November. Based on a work by Kurt Vonnegut, the piece has a score by Wendy Albrecht.

Bill Evans has resigned as director of Contemporary Dancers Canada (formerly Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers). He will continue to work with the company as resident teacher/choreographer.

The **Royal Winnipeg Ballet** has announced plans for the 1984-85 season. Following early autumn performances in Egypt and Greece, they will tour extensively in Western Canada, appear in five Ontario cities and dance in New England, North Dakota, Minnesota, Washington and Oregon. Seven new dancers join the company this season: Mark Lanham, a medalist at the Tokyo and Jackson competitions, and Pierre Beguin join as soloists; while Tracy Koga, Linda Cooper, Vincent Boyle, Bruce Monk and Colin Horsburgh (all graduates of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School Professional Division) enter the corps de ballet.

Le Groupe de la Place Royale showcases new choreography by its artistic director, Peter Boneham, and company members Michael Montanaro, Bill James and Tassy Teekman during its five-week fall tour, which includes performances in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Quebec City, Montreal and Ottawa.

Celia Franca was honoured for her contribution to the arts in Canada at a special gala performance in September at Ottawa's National Arts Centre.

Ottawa Dance Theatre will present new works by artistic director Judith Davies and Anna Blewchamp at performances in Ottawa during December. Guest artists will be Pat Miner and the Blue Current Preserve Swing Band.

Ontario Ballet Theatre is touring its newest production, *Beauty and The Beast*, throughout southern Ontario this fall. Designed by Mary Kerr, with a score by Raymond Pannell, the ballet is choreographed by Gloria Luoma. In November the company will present a workshop in the Brigantine Room at Toronto's Harbourfront, featuring choreography by Phyllis Whyte, David Allan and Helen Price, and will appear at Premiere Dance Theatre from December 26 to January 5.

1984-85 marks the 10th anniversary season for **Dancemakers**. Plans include October and April performances at Toronto's Premiere Dance Theatre, as well as tours of British Columbia and Ontario. A European tour, scheduled for the spring of 1985, will include per-

formances in Clermont-Ferrand, Paris, Cardiff, Stirling, Darlington, Coventry, LeMans, Brussels, Antwerp, Namur, Ghent and Granada.

The **Toronto International Festival**, held in June, ended its celebration of music and dance with an estimated \$100,000 surplus, which has been earmarked for an Arts Endowment Fund to provide assistance to Ontario music and dance artists. Festival director Muriel Sherrin announced that the first awards, to be given for the purpose of creating, performing or receiving training in music, opera, dance or music theatre, will be made in the fall of 1985.

In June, **Serge Lavoie**, a member of the National Ballet of Canada, won a silver medal at the first New York International Ballet Competition.

Toronto's **Premiere Dance Theatre** will present a pot-pourri of dance this season, featuring such diverse companies as the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble, Repertory Dance Company of Canada, Desrosiers Dance Theatre, the Bill Cratty Dance Theatre, the Danny Grossman Dance Company, LA LA LA (Human Steps), the Karen Jamieson Dance Company, Dance-

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Kim Lighthouse (Olga) and Gregory Osborne (Lensky) in the National Ballet's production of *Onegin*, choreographed by John Cranko, which was presented during the Toronto International Festival in June.

makers, the Metropolitan Opera Ballet (with a new work, *Edna in the Afternoon*, by Ann Ditchburn), Toronto Dance Theatre, the Alberta Ballet Company, Ballet Eddy Toussaint de Montréal, Contemporary Dancers

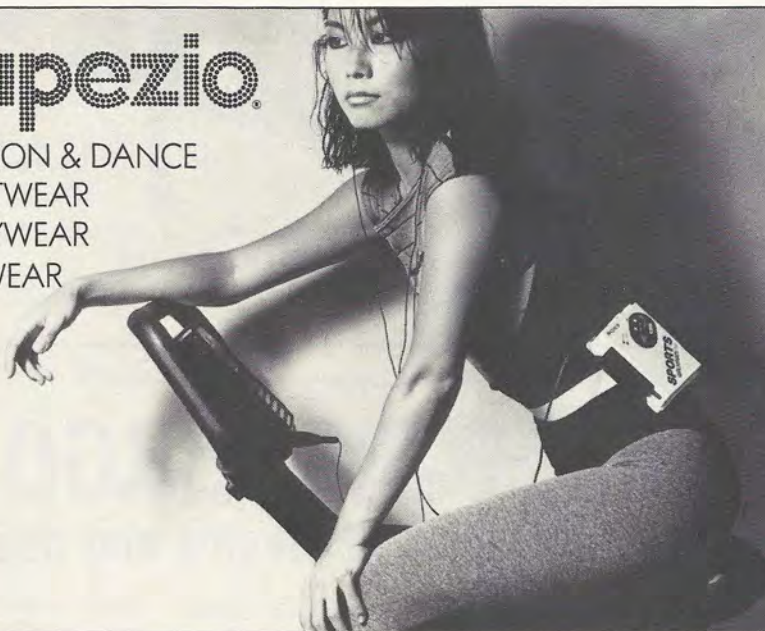
Canada and the North Carolina Dance Theatre.

Toronto Mayor Art Eggleton has officially declared the week of November 19-25 as "National Ballet School Week"

to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the **National Ballet School**. Activities will include public tours and demonstrations at the School and a reunion party for former students and staff. *Reminiscences*, a panel discussion, will fea-

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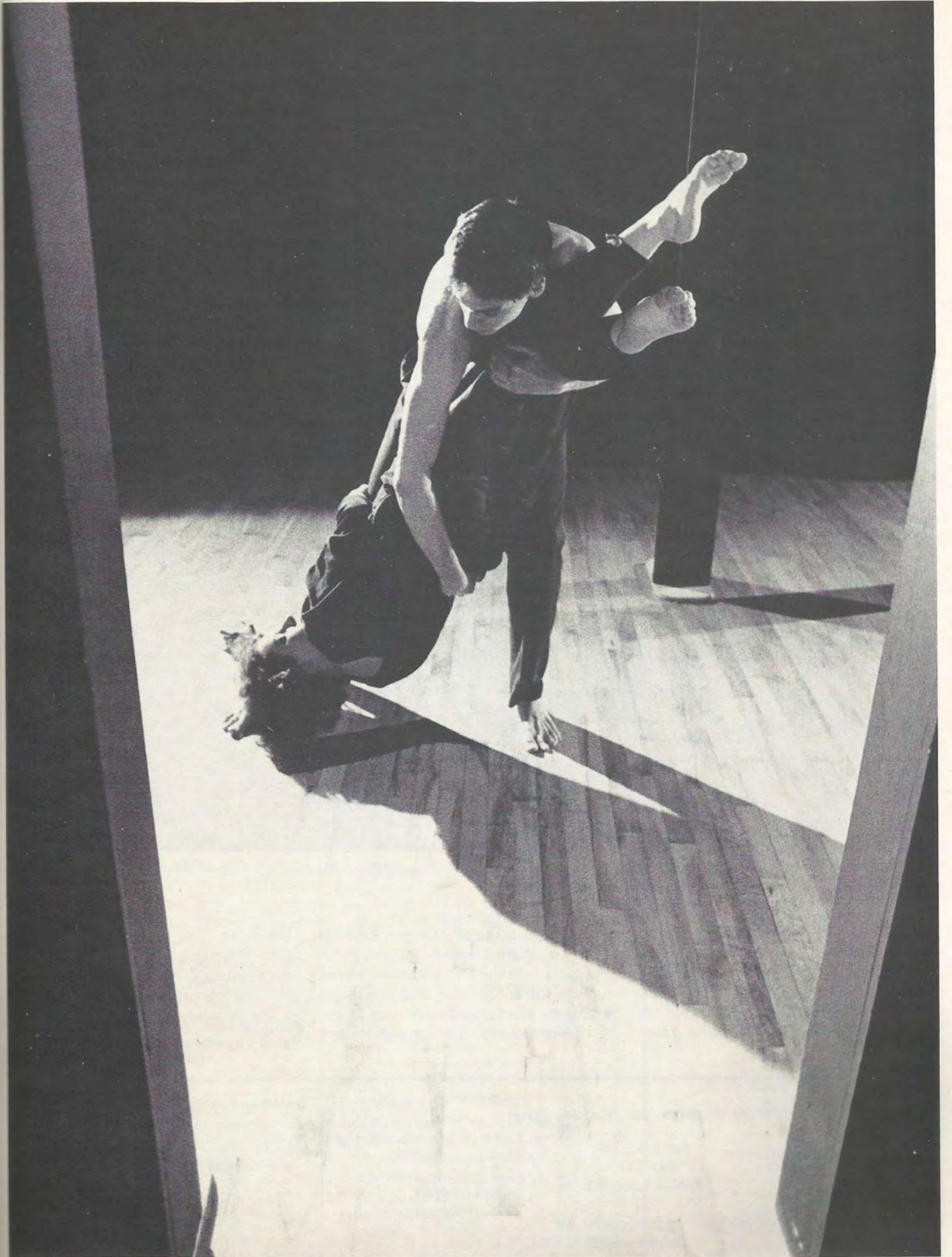
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Marc Boivin and Sandy Lapiere in Tassy Teekman's *Message on the Wall*, Le Groupe de la Place-Royale.



Toronto Dance Theatre will present David Earle's *Court of Miracles*, a Christmas show featuring more than 60 dancers, at the Premiere Dance Theatre in Toronto, December 13-22.

ture such international dance figures as Erik Bruhn, Rudi van Dantzig and Glen Tetley, who will speak about their training and professional development.

At the Celebration Performance on November 21 at O'Keefe Centre, grad-

uates now dancing with major international companies return to join with graduates here in Canada and present students for an evening which will include new works by Tetley, van Dantzig, Uwe Scholtz, Susana and Robert

Desrosiers. The program will also include Bournonville's *Conservatoire* and van Dantzig's *Four Last Songs*, a gift from the choreographer to the School on the occasion of its 20th anniversary in 1979.



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Ludmilla Chiriaeff, founder of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, and **Vanessa Harwood**, principal dancer with the National Ballet of Canada, have been named to the Order of Canada.

Anik Bissonnette and **Louis Robitaille**, principal dancers with Ballet Eddy Toussaint de Montréal, won a gold medal for best contemporary work—performing Toussaint's *Un Simple Moment*—at the first International Ballet Competition, held this past summer in Helsinki, Finland.

James Kudelka has been named resident choreographer by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens.

Fortier Danse-Création will appear at the Riverside Dance Festival in New York City, November 1, 3 and 4. New company members this season are Alain Thompson and Marie-Andrée Gougon.

Moment' Homme, to be held at Montreal's Tangente Danse Actuelle during October, will showcase 19 choreographers in six different programs. Among those scheduled to participate are Sun-Ergos, Kai H. Lai, Tedd Robinson, Bill James, Louis Guillemette, Michael Montanaro, Rodrigue Jean, Claude Godin, Pierre Blackburn, Pierre-Paul Savoie, Jean-Remi Arsenaault, Gregory Loudon, Richard Simas and Harold Vasselín, as well as West Berlin's Tanzfabrik and New York's Christopher Gillis.

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens has announced the promotion of Gioconda Barbuto, Sylvain Senez and Petter Toth-Horgosi to soloist, and Christina Escoda, Judith Johnson and Michelle Proulx to demi-soloist. New dancers include corps de ballet member Ilona Mazur, formerly of Poland's Grand Théâtre de Varsovie, and apprentices Marie-Josée Lecours, Francine Liboiron and Jocelyn Paradis, all graduates of the professional training program of l'Ecole supérieure de danse du Québec.

Dansepartout, the Quebec modern dance company which will celebrate its 10th anniversary in 1985, has named Marc Calfat as its new manager and touring agent.

Marijan Bayer has resigned as artistic director of the Halifax Dance Association.

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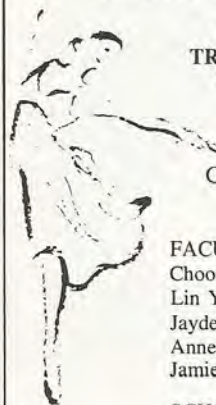
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