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COVER: Grey Bond as The Rum Tum Tugger in *Cats*.
Photograph by Michael Cooper.

Cats in Toronto: The Staging of a Musical

by Sandy Naiman

David Taylor is standing in the back of an empty church hall, weary after a fruitless afternoon auditioning understudies. With less than 48 hours before the first day of *Cats* rehearsals with the Toronto company, he still needs three men. After more than 1,000 auditions from Vancouver to Montreal, still three more men.

"*Cats* is the most difficult singing and dance show ever devised," he says, sighing. "Tougher even than *West Side Story*."

It is cagey, after all, to become a cat.

This is the fourth *Cats* production that director Taylor, musical director Stanley Labowsky and choreographer T. Michael Reed have mounted, but the first few days are still difficult—teaching 32 performers to become cat-like.

And not the domestic cats you'd have as pets, but Jellicle cats—a breed you'll not find listed in any glossary of cats. They have all the archetypal cat characteristics: the playful mischievousness of Mungojerrie and Rumpleteazer; the deceit and shadiness of Macavity, the Mystery Cat.

Yet there are the unrecognizable, un-cat-like qualities, too, like the sweet sentimentalism of Gus, the Theatre Cat, or the glitzy, conjuring magicianery of Mr. Mistoffelees. Very unusual cats, indeed. Not exactly half-cat, half-human. But a peculiarly playful and, in the case of Grizabella, pathetic and passionate hybrid.

The challenge of *Cats* spans every theatrical convention. First, every prop must be three-and-a-bit times life-size. The set is scaled up so the cats—and the audience—feel cat-size, or, if you like, the way Alice in Wonderland must have felt when she shrunk after drinking from the bottle labelled "Drink Me".

You walk into an alley, "a playground *cum* rubbish dump", as you enter the auditorium of the Elgin Theatre. It's littered with what looks like tons of the refuse of human existence. You'll recognize everything—all the name-brands, all the household cast-offs—but from a cat's point of view. You'll feel like a cat in a cat's world, not like a human looking in and down.

Gillian Lynne's choreography (from the parent *Cats* company in London) is equally kaleidoscopic. Reed explains: "It's very unique. A combination of ballet, jazz and modern dance, all jumbled together. There's a tap number and a jazz number and a ballet number, but most of it is a combination. And the production works on so many levels. On kids and on adults."

"But we have to emphasize [during the first days of rehearsal] the difference between this show and the average musical," Taylor says. "And that is, we're not creating characters, we're creating cats. Everything stems from the common denominator that this is not a human world, but a cat world."

For the dancers the transition is gruelling. It grates against everything they've ever been taught. But the finished product, a cluster of eccentric, cat-like creatures who suggest a distinct feline physicality, is quite subtle.

An example: A cat stretches out stage-right, watching the activity in front of her, twitching her tail with her hand, to and fro, over her sleek, spandexed body. It's a relaxed, rhythmic movement. Undeniably languorous, as only a cat can be. Now, no cat is capable of such a manoeuvre—tail-in-paw twitching. But the image is unmistakably cat-like and, at the same time, superbly stylized.

There are hundreds of these little cat-like idiosyncrasies, so cunningly choreographed into the action that you gradually take them for granted and believe them.

In no other theatrical production is Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief" more crucial than in *Cats*. There are no cat costumes (or what you would expect of cat costumes); instead, there are lavishly painted unitards decorated with everything from beads and broom bristles and sequins to a variety of wools and other bits of bric-a-brac, and we are compelled to disbelieve and then believe again.

"Every audience comes in and asks, 'What is it going to be?'" Taylor says. "'Are they going to be cats? Is there going to be a lot of meowing? Can you really make me believe in a cat's world?'" It's a crucial question in creating that



Tom Skudra

Members of the *Cats* company.

willingness to disbelieve.”

“It’s a whole way of thinking about your body,” says Reed. “Dancers are used to thinking about the line of their bodies. Used to being beautiful. And I ask them during those first few days of rehearsal to *not* be beautiful, but to be pagan, to be basic, to be primitive, to be ugly.

“I ask them to be as far away from what they normally think of themselves as they can. *Not* to create that line. And it’s a commitment, and they must not be intimidated by it. I’m not making them into cats. That’s an important distinction. But I want the sensuality, the tension, the quickness, the real physicality that reminds you of a cat.”

The stereotyped cat movements you might expect are absent, too. No clawing or hissing. “And nobody ever says meow,” says Labowsky. “We never approach the sound of a cat. There are quick changes in tempo. Andrew Lloyd Webber devised those, so they can sit still one moment and spring about the next.”

So the performers, during their six-week rehearsal period, unlearn being human and then learn to be silly, to make fools of themselves, to be frolicking, to be feline. “It’s a challenge,” says Taylor, “and in many ways it’s more exciting than working on character and plot.”

But there is a strong plot to the fantasy, Labowsky ex-

If He Could See Them Now: What Would T.S. Eliot Think of *Cats*?

Watching the Broadway production, I couldn’t help wondering what T.S. Eliot would think if he could see how his cats had grown. The answer comes from Ruth Grogan, a professor of English at York University, and from Peter Ackroyd, in his very timely new biography, *T.S. Eliot*.

The ironies of Eliot’s character and his nonsensical side are artfully mirrored in *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats*. Ezra Pound had nicknamed Eliot “Old Possum” because, as Grogan says, “he liked to play dead, metaphorically speaking. He was so respectable, such a correct Englishman. Wyndham Lewis used to say [Eliot] was disguised like Westminster Abbey.

“Although he was often perceived as a very unhappy man,

very aloof and reserved, *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats* showed his playful side, the underside of his imagination, his comical side. He loved music hall and vaudeville and had quite an aural imagination. He loved crazy sounds.

“Though he had no children of his own,” Grogan explains, “he loved cats and probably wrote *Practical Cats* for the children of Sir Geoffrey Faber, of Faber & Faber Publishing, where he worked for many years.”

Eliot loved to play practical jokes and was quite witty—even silly—with his intimate friends. He loved to play roles himself, and many of those roles are in *Practical Cats*.

“I think,” concludes Grogan, “he’d have been delighted with *Cats*, the musical. After all, he wrote plays, attempted a popular art and tried to appeal to a popular audience. He was very involved in the theatre world.”



Todd Noel as Tumblebrutus.

Michael Cooper

plains, though "it isn't apparent, and you don't have to understand the connection. The through-line is that every year the Jellicle cats get together, and one of them will be reborn, will go to the Heaviside Layer.

"And there are certain rituals and forms around that event—certain things that are meant to happen, and certain unexpected things that happen. These are interruptions in a

plot which isn't linear and not even essential for the audience to understand. But it's vital that we help the cast understand and focus on the emotional impact of this through-line, for the audience to be able to get emotionally involved."

Cats is an unprecedented theatrical phenomenon, not just in Canada—where it's the most ambitious commercial theatre venture ever mounted—but in the world. You might say London's Really Useful Company parent production has given birth to a litter of *Cats*, now playing in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Vienna, Budapest, Tokyo and, next summer, in Sydney, Australia.

Andrew Lloyd Webber, composer of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita*, began setting T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* to music in late 1977. By 1980 he was considering his "settings", as he called them, for a possible concert anthology that could also be performed on television.

Some of the pieces were performed in 1980 at the Sydmon-ton Festival. Valerie Eliot, the poet's widow, came to the concert and brought with her various unpublished verses by her husband. Among them was "Grizabella, the Glamour Cat", an eight-line verse fragment which so impressed Webber that he began to realize the real potential of his project. He has written that "the musical and dramatic images that this created for me made me feel that there was very much more to the project than I had realized."

"Grizabella", as Trevor Nunn (joint artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company) was to write, described "an intensely recognizable character, with powerful human resources, while introducing the themes of mortality, and the past, which occur repeatedly in the major poems." Its discovery was the turning point in the creation of *Cats*.

Trevor Nunn joined Webber to develop and then direct *Cats*, John Napier to design its spectacular environmental setting and costumes and Gillian Lynne to choreograph it—a mammoth task, since *Cats* is danced from beginning to end.

"Nothing will compare," writes Nunn in the program book, "with the memory of the ecstatic strain and the grim



Rebirth of a Theatre

Considering its unsightly disrepair and its dilapidated elegance, the Elgin is probably Toronto's most perfectly suited theatre to house *Cats*.

For—like Grizabella, the Glamour Cat—its beauty and charm are still in evidence, and it is grimy, seedy and haunted with memories. As one cat sings of Grizabella, in a refrain that might well describe the Elgin, "You'd really ha' thought she'd ought to be dead . . ."

As Grizabella is reborn in *Cats*, so, ironically—once the province set out to revitalize it—is the Elgin Theatre. Perched, rather improbably, on Yonge Street amidst the bustle of retail activity, it has been almost 60 years since the stars of vaudeville played there.

Built in 1913 as a stacked theatre (with the Winter Garden positioned above it), the Elgin was the first movie palace in Canada, and the Winter Garden—the true jewel of the two theatres—our only roof garden. Irving Berlin, along with the famous vaudeville team of Weber and Fields and a "carefully selected photoplay" opened Loew's Yonge Street (as the Elgin was called) in December of that year. But, with "talkies" on the horizon, vaudeville gradually died out. In 1928 the Elgin was converted into a movie house, and the Winter Garden (exclusively a vaudeville house) was closed and has remained dark.

In preparing for the indefinite run of *Cats*, the province allocated \$1.3 million to retro-fit the theatre—bring it up to current health and safety standards—to restore the lobby, to clean and repair the seats in the auditorium and to paint the auditorium black. (The job has been completed, considerably under its original budget.) The theatre's foyers and washrooms got a cosmetic face-lift, and adjustments to the stage involved replacing the rigging and reinforcing the stage floor.

"What we're really doing," says Janis Barlow, theatre consul-



Michael Cooper

Members of the *Cats* company.

joy of the first time we made *Cats*." But every opening is different, as is every production. In the fall of 1982 the Shubert Organization, with executive producers Tyler Gatchell and Peter Neufeld and producer David Geffen, opened *Cats* at the

Winter Garden Theater in New York City. The rest, as they say, is history.

Until Toronto.

Tina VanderHeyden had worked with Tyler Gatchell

tant with the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, "is making the theatre into a cultural asset."

The most interesting facet of this phase of the Elgin's rebirth has been the activity in its lobby. Between 14 and 26 layers of paint have been scraped off, representing not only its 1928 and 1935 revampings, but probably dozens more. All the columns were remarkblized; the gold leaf was re-applied and re-stained; the marble baseboards were scraped; repairs were made to the plaster moldings; and carpets, specially woven in Quebec, were laid.

"We're restoring the lobby so people can get a taste of what the theatre could, or will be like," says Barlow. "Phasing is the sensible way to approach a project of this magnitude. Restoration is a long process."

For Susan Fish, Minister of Citizenship and Culture, the rebirth of the Elgin represents bringing live theatre back to Yonge Street. "We're building the habit of thinking about going to the theatre, rather than the cinema, by opening the Elgin," she says. "With people walking through those wonderful glass doors and seeing all that brass sparkling bright, they're building a different cultural habit than going to the movies on Yonge Street."

Still, the long-term future of the Elgin rests on finding a private-sector investor who can complete the renovation to both the Elgin and the Winter Garden—a project that has an esti-

mated \$20 million price tag.

"The Winter Garden is a serious problem," Fish explains, "because of its garden aspect." A truly magical place, the Winter Garden is a remarkable and meticulously reproduced garden, complete with columns built like tree trunks and a ceiling covered in foliage—all constructed around a stage that's been dark since 1928.

Time has not been kind to the Winter Garden. All those thousands of leaves and shrubs have collected dust and soot. What was once a fairyland is now a wrinkled, crumbling cavern.

"And how does one replicate that?" Fish asks. "The costs must be enormous." Not only replicating the garden, but getting to it—which presents another expensive problem, involving escalators and elevators (since the Winter Garden is seven stories above street level).

"What will happen remains to be seen," Fish says. "But we are open to discussion with private-sector operators."

Besides giving the theatrical community a boost, the Canadian company of *Cats* might just be the incentive to entice investors. And Fish is confident that—with people witnessing a working theatre, with a commercially successful show running in it—the Elgin and Winter Garden Theatres will, indeed, bloom again.



Alexandre Beaulieu as Mistoffelees.

Michael Cooper

when he brought the touring production of *Evita* to the O'Keefe Centre, where she was publicity director, in 1982. "Our relationship had evolved," he says. "After all, *Evita* for a 10-week summer engagement was an enormous risk, but Tina and the O'Keefe took it upon themselves to have *Evita*, and she did a wonderful job on the public relations. That's when the idea of doing *Cats* in Canada first came about."

When VanderHeyden left the O'Keefe Centre the following year, it was for the express purpose of becoming a theatrical impresario in a town not known for its commercial theatre. *Cats* was her first priority, and, though it perched in the back of her mind while she tended to a variety of other projects, she would not let it go. When she and Gatchell talked several times more about mounting a Canadian production, he became more and more enthusiastic, and she became more and more encouraged. But where, in Toronto, could a big, major musical play for an indefinite run?

Enter Gina Mallet, then the *Toronto Star* theatre critic, who, on February 23, 1984, was talking to Toronto producer Marlene Smith on the telephone. She happened to suggest that Smith go after *Cats* to open the Elgin Theatre, "on the theory," Mallet recalls, "that once the Elgin was used, it would be seen by the province as usable, and they'd be able to get the huge amount of money needed to renovate."

"The very day I talked to Marlene on the phone, I happened to be lunching with Tina VanderHeyden and I was very excited about the project. She said she knew Tyler Gatchell, who has the rights to *Cats*, and knew that he wanted it to run indefinitely, if it was going to run here at all. So, with Tina having the contacts with the producer and with Marlene having the contacts with the province [which owns the Elgin/Winter Garden facilities], that's how the ball started rolling."

It's a huge ball. According to Smith, a veteran producer of dozens of successful cabaret productions over the past decade, "*Cats* is probably the biggest show ever mounted in Canada, with the biggest budget [\$2 million, plus]. It's the most technical, with the largest cast [32] and the most intricate costumes. Technically it's a nightmare."

And, as unprecedented as it is, so it seems to have challenged the craftspeople who have made *Cats*. There was a healthy sense of competition in the shops about town during the nine weeks of production, an air of "We can do this, we've got the expertise, we might even be able to improve it." For all the designers, *Cats* represented a visually exciting phenomenon they were anxious to tackle, one which impressed them far more than the complex and often mysterious performance elements in the show. More than one remarked, "It's a technical show." And, for them, it certainly is.

Companies had to bid on the contracts for props, costumes and set. Many of the designers had never bid on a show before. And it had to happen fast.

When the contract between the province and the producers was signed, and agreements for a \$1.3 million renovation to the lobby and retro-fit to the theatre were finalized, the bid call went out. It was already October 1984, and the show was due to open in March 1985. And it was all uncharted territory for many of the players behind the scenes.

For Roger Read, who designed more than 600 props, a whirlwind trip to Washington in early November for a matinee was followed by a quick swing through the five New York shops that built the Broadway show. Then he spent an afternoon perusing the Winter Garden stage.

It was all so fast, he's hazy on the details now. When he flew back to Toronto, he had three days to cost the show. He

hardly slept that week. The figures and the scope of the show were swimming in his head. At first he felt intimidated; then he tried not to think about it.

Anne Armit and Patricia Boulden of Nigel's and Ruth Hossie and Sharon Purdy of Unlimited Costumes, all seasoned costume designers, bid on what they felt they could handle, and the costume contracts were split between them and Clayton James of Malabar.

Still, the term "franchised theatre" has been fancifully bandied about their shops because of the precision with which they must follow the lead of the New York designs. Every point stroke on every piece of milliskin is supervised, and every character costume must be replicated exactly.

Getting the materials has meant trips into Manhattan and hours of long-distance telephone detective work. "Our hands are tied creatively, and it takes some of the fun out of it," says Purdy, sitting in her office, thumbing through the *Cats* "bible", a thick red binder filled with Polaroids and sketches of costumes, notes on how they're made, swatches of fabric and strands of wool and thread.

"In fact, it's a little bit frustrating, since I know we could improve things and make some things better. Some things are so specific, because that's what Parsons-Meares [the Broadway *Cats* costume designers] found in some basement in New York. You just can't find it here two years later."

Grant Milligan has been building lavish sets for years, principally for the Canadian Opera Company. A pragmatic professional, he got the contract to construct the set because he simply couldn't see the point of delaying the opening of *Cats* by six weeks—as was originally planned—to get the set finished. "And I couldn't see losing six weeks of box office, so we just worked overtime to get it done."

Musical director Stanley Labowsky summarizes the ultimate challenge of *Cats*. "There are three primary areas of difficulty: the physical endurance needed, the constant concentration in portraying a cat and the absolute diction the lyrics demand.

"But there is one big question mark with this company, and that is how they're going to handle the long run. How they're going to sustain themselves. There is an art to the long run."

Producers Smith and VanderHeyden are asking another crucial question. Can a Toronto audience sustain a long-run, \$40-per-ticket show?

And, for the Canadian theatre community, *Cats* poses the most challenging question of all. Can Canada produce and support its own indigenous commercial theatre?

Wait and see. In time, *Cats* will let the answers out of the bag. •



Sandy Naiman has been a Lifestyle feature writer for the *Toronto Sun* since 1977 and women's editor of CHFI-FM since 1982. A confirmed dog-person, she has never dreamed of owning a cat—or, more correctly, allowing a cat to own her. She is now seriously reconsidering.

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James Kudelka: Profile of an Enigma

by Paula Citron

Choreographer James Kudelka is an enigma. He likes to paint himself as the farm boy who left school with only a tenth grade education; yet most colleagues are in awe of his intellect. The personality he presents to outsiders is one of intense commitment coupled with a wall of reserve; his closest friends, however, value his incredible loyalty and sense of fun. While some of his fellows in the dance community have been put off by Kudelka's outspoken bluntness on various issues, those who know him well talk about his self-doubt and insecurity. Somewhere amongst these conflicting images lies the real James Kudelka, one of Canada's most important young dancemakers.

Kudelka was indeed born on a farm—in Newmarket, Ontario—but it was a vast property belonging to a wealthy businessman. Kudelka's father was the estate manager, and his mother was a school guidance counsellor. Despite the rural setting, the arts were an integral part of family life. Actress Jan Kudelka, James' older sister, explains: "Culture and the arts were a binding force in my parents' marriage. With six children, they needed a break, and attending plays and concerts was a way out. They used the arts to enrich the home environment and got great joy out of experiencing and discussing plays they had seen. They also used the arts as a way of channelling our energy."

She fondly remembers the games of the "Rock Bottom Four"—herself, James, Matthew and Frances. "We used to put on musicals such as *The Fantasticks* in the living room and we even made up programs. We also played pretend games in the barn, using make-up and old clothes. Once we made our mother "Queen for a Day", and she had to do her housework wearing a crown and a cloak!"

The whole family, she continues, was supportive of the arts, and there was never a question of going into some other profession when Jan, James or Matthew (a writer) fell on lean times. "For years our parents were walking, talking versions

of the Canada Council. If we were broke, they would tide us over without complaint."

James Kudelka started taking dance lessons when he was four. His association with the National Ballet School and artistic director Betty Oliphant began when his dance teacher suggested to his parents that they send him to the School's Saturday afternoon classes. When he entered the School at age 10, dance became his career. "I really missed him," recalls Jan Kudelka, "but he was born to dance. Even at age four he had proper turnout. He also had great physical energy and a stubborn bloody-mindedness that made him very determined."

Betty Oliphant remembers Kudelka as someone who negotiated his own life. "He filled out his own forms when he joined the School. He was old beyond his years and could be very irritating, especially when he would tell teachers how things should be done. But he was usually right. He was also the most reliable student when we did lecture-demonstrations, and it was clear from his clean technique that he would definitely be a soloist."

In those early days, when he appeared with the other students in *The Nutcracker*, Kudelka was also making an impression at the National Ballet of Canada. Principal dancers Victoria Bertram and Charles Kirby remember a serious boy, with big, fish-bowl glasses who was more adult than child. "He'd have to take off his glasses when he danced," explains Bertram, "which would make him squint and appear all the more intense. He also had a large head and small shoulders, which made him look even funnier. But still you knew this boy had something."

"Unlike the other kids, who would be giggling and laughing when they weren't onstage, James would always stand in the wings, asking questions about lighting and choreography. He was a misfit at the School because he related better to older people. It seems to be the destiny of someone with great talent and great intellect to live a tortured life, but



Andrew Oxenham

James Kudelka in rehearsal with members of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens.

when you have huge glasses and a briefcase and you're only 30 years old, you're asking to be abused!"

"When I was 11," says Kudelka, "I ended up in Miss O's office because I wanted to do more than classes and was unhappy with the discipline. Because she was sympathetic to talent, I was allowed to put on little skits at lunch hours and do choreography. As kids, we were precocious; but then nobody is more opinionated than Betty Oliphant, and that trait filters down from the top. It was probably the best and worst thing about the School."

The end result of this mini-rebellion was an astonishing choreographic feat which made a lasting impression on anyone who saw it, including Charles Kirby. "James' class was performing an in-house program, and I had been invited to see it," he recalls. "James had choreographed his version of *Concerto Barocco*, and I still have a picture of those tiny, fidgety, nervous little girls performing Balanchine. The parts that James couldn't remember, he choreographed himself. It is still incredible to me that one so young could absorb complicated choreography and reproduce it. I knew then that he would be a choreographer."

Kudelka views the experience from another aspect: "I learned about the conflict between the desire to create and the

desire to give up when things are going badly. At one point when the choreography was not working out, I went to my room and hid in the upper bunk, with my head to the wall. One of the girls, Heather Farquharson, marched into the room and said, 'We're all waiting, so you better come right now!' I remember Heather whenever I want to give up."

A choreographic effort at age 14 brought Kudelka to the attention of principal dancer Veronica Tennant. "He had created a pas de deux to Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, and I was very impressed with the complex musicality," she says. "There was real insight into Bach's intentions and not a superficial rendering of the music. It was such an extraordinary experience when it was put on at a School show that I mentioned it to a journalist at *Dance Magazine* who was doing a story on me. She misunderstood and thought that James was going to do a work for me and said that in the article."

"When he did enter the company two years later, I asked him to create a piece for the choreographic workshop, so the article proved to be true. The pas de deux for me and Winthrop Corey, to Franck's *Violin Sonata*, was about the struggle that occurs in relationships and was incredibly mature. Even then James was showing signs of his choreographic trademarks. His musicality, coupled with an ability to

get inside the music, creates complex works with many levels. More important, James has never made an empty movement to fill out a phrase of music. All his steps count for something."

In 1972, at age 16, Kudelka joined the National Ballet of Canada. His arrival coincided with the "Rudi years", when the company was touring Nureyev's production of *The Sleeping Beauty* around the world, with the great dancer as guest artist.

Betty Oliphant pushed for the move, although Kudelka had not completed his education, because she felt that he had

outgrown the School. "It was the right time for him to go into the company, because he was dying of boredom. He really didn't need school; he was the kind of person who educates himself by reading and listening to music. Yet he was immature emotionally, with a precociousness that covered up a basic insecurity, and he needed another environment. It also seemed right for his career, because being in the company with Nureyev would continue his dance education."

To his admirers at the company it was the right move. "He didn't want to do academics," says Kirby. "He wanted to dance and choreograph. Yet anyone who talks to him would



Veronica Tennant and Peter Schaufuss in *Washington Square*.

Kudelka's Peers Talk About His Work

Although the success of a dance work depends on the audience and the critics, the most important judges may be a choreographer's peers. Some of James Kudelka's colleagues talk about his work:

Washington Square (1979)

I truly loved the character of Catherine, because she was a loser and felt inadequate. She was very human—more human than the world of ballet usually produces. The part required the technical ability of a ballerina to perform a role usually reserved for great actresses. It was a subtle characterization that you could develop in subsequent performances. There was a completeness about the ballet that I enjoyed.—Veronica Tennant

You don't get many chances with a role like Dr. Sloper in ballet—one that has a starting point and a finish and gives you something to say in between. We wanted to do the ballet again and again. Actors and directors who were not involved in dance commented on how brilliantly James had transcribed the book and the play.—Charles Kirby

Intimate Letter (1981)

In James' solo for me, he really provided challenges. There were fast weight changes and changes of directions. I am usually given long and lyrical movements. Now suddenly I was moving quickly and in ways never seen in me before. Suddenly my body was put through paces opposite to my training; it was exhilarating!—Susan Macpherson

Hedda (1983)

The experience gave a lot to me. It was exciting, because I could test myself. I'm not a modern dancer who is used to moving with form. James

would give me images rather than movement. I was a pattern with arms and legs filling space. It was as if James was Picasso rather than Cezanne. I never could have performed in Tetley's Sphinx without the experience of Hedda.—Gizella Witkowsky



Gizella Witkowsky and Hazaros Surmeyan in *Hedda*.

In Paradisum (1983)

It is a modern dance masterpiece. It is miraculous that someone with modern dance training that happened in bits and pieces could produce it, because it couldn't have come from his training. One can identify the influences—Graham, Lubovitch and the Limón arms—but the wonder of the work is that no one of the elements stands out. All are integrated into a unique idiom of his own and transformed into a new vocabulary. I'm astonished that it could be done.—David Earle

Dancing in James' work became an emotional experience. I will never tire of In Paradisum. It is so satisfying, such a complete piece—with nothing missing in its concept—that it is hard to do another ballet after it. I am exhausted, yet happy.—Betsy Baron

Court of Miracles (1983-84)

On an alternate night, when James was not dancing in Act One, he got a townspeople outfit and joined the others on the stage. I saw him walk around, vitally involved—by choice—in the corps, reacting to his own choreography danced by others. I find that kind of humility inspiring in a great artist.—David Earle

Alliances (1984)

It's a masterpiece. I feel it's too long, but I don't see one step that could be taken out. It has so much to say that it is almost too much, too full. It is beyond movement for movement's sake. It is deep.—Victoria Bertram

believe he had a university education, because his mind is a warehouse of knowledge."

During his eight years with the National Ballet, Kudelka not only developed as a dancer, but as a choreographer. When he was 23, *Washington Square* received its company premiere. It was the second time (following *A Party*) that one of his ballets had moved from its choreographic workshop beginnings into the mainstream of the repertoire.

The piece was given a large budget, which included provision for lavish sets and costumes and a commissioned musical score. Gerry Eldred, former administrative director of the National Ballet and now executive director of the Stratford Festival, explains why Kudelka was given this big push: "The workshop program was meant to uncover choreographic talent. James stood out because of his basic understanding of dance, his musicality, his intense emotionalism and his sense of drama. Most people can come up with an idea for a pas de deux, but in James there were greater possibilities. He had ideas for stories and knew not only what he wanted them to sound like, but what they should look like. He was not just a one- or two-idea choreographer. He had talent that would grow."

Given the conservative nature of the company's board of directors, Eldred had his task cut out to find the money. "The National doesn't have many opportunities to fail. Everyone understood the investment in a workshop, but it was harder to make the transition to getting these works into the repertoire."

Nonetheless, as an acknowledgment of his talent, Kudelka was appointed a resident choreographer in 1980.

The years 1979 and 1980 marked turning points in Kudelka's career. During 1979 he spent seven months studying in Europe on a Canada Council grant; in June 1980 he participated in the second National Choreographic Seminar, held at the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts. It was the influence of these two events that changed the direction of his life, both as a dancer and a choreographer.

During his European travels Kudelka spent five nights out of every seven attending concerts and performances of dance, opera and plays. In the course of his orgy of culture, he came to several conclusions. "I began to see the classics like *Swan Lake* as having a lot of walking around. In Europe I saw dance where it was important to keep moving and I discovered that modern dance, in particular, eliminated those things that prevent you from moving.

"I loved pieces like MacMillan's *Gloria* for the Royal Ballet, because it made a statement about war. This is the influence that I took into *In Paradisum*—which is about death and dying—to make a statement, to create this world, to portray the inevitability of what happens to us. I used to love Ashton's *A Month in the Country*, but it became boring when it was on the same program as *Gloria*."

At Banff, Kudelka embraced modern dance. The purpose of the seminar, organized by Grant Strate, was to bring together six choreographers and six composers with 30 dancers and six musicians from across Canada to explore the creation of new work. The atmosphere was a hothouse situation, with the choreographers required to come up with an original work each day, based on projects assigned by the choreographic directors—Robert Cohan, a former member of Martha Graham's company and founder of London Contemporary Dance Theatre in England, and Todd Bolender, who had danced and choreographed with Balanchine. In each day's work the participants were encouraged to go beyond their



Andrew Oxenham

Cynthia Lucas and Victoria Bertram in *Playhouse*.

self-imposed limits.

Kudelka was the only ballet-based choreographer there and found the experience cataclysmic. "I made new friends in modern dance and was overwhelmed by their acceptance," he says. "I also discovered that the sex of the dancer didn't matter; once you got the women off pointe shoes, there was equality. I worked with parallel placement and getting grounded. It was the turning point for me, because I saw that I had been working with a limited vocabulary, and Banff helped to open me up. I had been pretty repressed, even in my choice of subject matter. My pieces had been mostly about unrequited love or rape, and I now wanted to say something about life."

Modern dancer Susan Macpherson attended the seminar as assistant to Cohan and Bolender. She had known Kudelka vaguely through the years and had followed his work. When she heard he was coming, Macpherson felt that it would be very important for him, because she had seen many people go beyond their choreographic limits at the first seminar (held at Toronto's York University in 1978).

Kudelka, after first agreeing to attend, begged off just before the seminar was to begin. Strate phoned Macpherson, asking her help. "Grant called me because they wanted James at Banff. Of all the choreographers in the country, it was felt that he would benefit the most. I talked to him on the phone for 45 minutes. James claimed he was ill with the flu, but he was also nervous about working with a modern dance group, because he thought his art form was not respected. I had to convince him that people, including myself, were dying to work with him, and that we all admired his tremendous talent."

According to Macpherson and others, Banff gave Kudelka a greater choreographic freedom and broadened his scope. Macpherson explains: "For the first few days, he was terribly



Katia Breton and Sylvain Lafortune in *Alliances*.

nervous, and I had to mother him. But after he made solid friendships, he was flying. In my opinion, he grew the fastest of all the choreographers. He absorbed everything and threw out his old perceptions. He was able to get rid of literal gestures and reduce dance to its essentials, to its nerve ends. Cohan likened him to a young Cranko or a young MacMillan.

"After Banff, his choreography became more risky, and the lines blurred between modern dance and ballet. He moved from the narrative story ballet to abstract ideas."

Nowhere was the new direction in Kudelka's choreography more evident than in *Hedda*, the last work he created for the National Ballet. "Before he went to Banff," explains Kirby, "James was going to use a Prokofiev piano concerto. After Banff, he threw out that idea and commissioned a score/sound collage from Norma Beecroft, who had been at the seminar. During *Hedda* he worked differently, by finding new ways to do old things, by broadening the scope of the 300-year-old steps. He was in search of freedom and less restrictive movements." Tennant noticed that Banff had brought Kudelka into the modern idiom, and that his movement had become more physical.

Gizella Witkowsky, who played Hedda, was surprised when Kudelka cast her in the role, because she was not one of the dancers who usually appeared in his works. "I was his experiment," she explains. "It seemed that he was using unclassical movement, but putting us on pointe. He didn't want us to act or use mannerisms to tell a story, but to allow the movement to convey his ideas. The focus was on Hedda, not

on the story. It was more philosophical. Because it showed relationships and was not a literal explanation, the audiences and critics didn't understand it."

Perhaps the greatest result of the Banff/Europe influence was the impetus Kudelka felt to leave the National Ballet and join Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in the summer of 1981. The malaise had been building for several years, and Kudelka, like other dancers in the company, had felt the lack of direction and the low morale under Alexander Grant. But more than that, Kudelka felt stifled by the classics and frustrated at the difficulty of getting works into the repertoire.

To talk to Kudelka is to detect a bitterness about the National as a company and Toronto as a city. "I left three years too late, but I'm glad I did," he comments. "Montreal is a good place to find yourself; in Toronto you are categorized into a group before you are accepted. Montreal is a city of people, not groups. I changed cities and I'm doing better work.

"What really got to me was the 'kiss-off' letter Alexander sent to me ending our association. If I was no longer a resident, then I couldn't be a resident choreographer. I would have kept up an association.

"Nobody wanted me to go to Les Grands, because it's considered Canada's third company—even though it's larger than the Royal Winnipeg. But I saw in Les Grands an interesting rep that I wanted to dance, a willingness to take choreographic risks and experiment, and a dancer's company—without stars. I'm still waiting for creative stuff to happen at the National."

In retrospect, most people who know Kudelka well feel the move to Les Grands Ballets was a good one. At the National Ballet he was locked into journeyman roles and second leads; at Les Grands Ballets he became a principal dancer. At the National his work rarely toured; at Les Grands, where Kudelka is a resident choreographer, his work has been given international exposure. As co-artistic director Daniel Jackson points out, Kudelka's ballets at Les Grands have remained in the repertoire and have undergone cast changes. "Every creator," says Jackson, "should see what the life process of a work will be."

Adds Linda Stearns, Jackson's colleague: "James has been given the freedom to develop his talent. He only does one piece for us a year, because he's interested in being exposed to other companies. When he comes back to us, he's recharged. For example, he's created works for Dancemakers, Toronto Dance Theatre and Paul-André Fortier's company, as well as appearing with Susan Macpherson in Ottawa and lecturing on choreography at the University of Quebec."

Many people interviewed for this article pointed out that the time had come for Kudelka to cut the umbilical cord from the National Ballet, a home where he had been a *wunderkind*; at Les Grands Ballets Canadiens he has had the freedom to find his own identity and break away from the classical idiom. As Toronto Dance Theatre's David Earle says, "Talents such as his should have an impact on the home company, and James sensed that there was more to be had than he was being offered."

Perhaps Kudelka's good friend Vicki Bertram is able to put the move to Les Grands Ballets in the best perspective: "James needed an opportunity to be recognized for what he had done. Here he was one of the family; at Les Grands he is a


'somebody'. He never had a big success at the National with any of his ballets, and I wonder if he will ever come to terms with the company. In the more intimate workshops, his works received standing ovations; yet his ballets in the main repertoire never had an overwhelming response."

Without a doubt, Kudelka has blossomed at Les Grands Ballets and has produced highly regarded works, such as *In Paradisum* and *Alliances*. Recently he worked on *Dracula*, with avant-garde dancer Margie Gillis as guest artist.

"Les Grands has the atmosphere I need as a creator," he explains. "The dancers have been an inspiration to me, because they want to dance. The perfect bodies from the Ballet School don't interest me. The dancers at Les Grands have all different kinds of training, which makes for an exciting mix."

"Antony Tudor once said that it is hard to find bad dancers anymore and, as Bob Cohan has pointed out, if dancers are too well-trained, choreographers don't know what to do with them. Les Grands is a company where the steps don't come too easily and fall into a pattern. It is the difference between a thinking and a non-thinking dancer—the more technique, the less head. I need thinking dancers."

The dancers at Les Grands Ballets are equally admiring of Kudelka. Betsy Baron, who has appeared in all of his works, comments: "I think he's a genius. His experiments with movements amaze me. He will do the unexpected, and yet, after dancing it, it becomes the most natural thing in the world. You have to have a centred strength so you can go off centre to try new things. For example, in the second movement of *Alliances* there is a lot of body contact which is not your basic way of moving in pointe shoes. The dancers are willing to try anything James asks, because most of us want to be part of his works. He provides an intellectual and tech-



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nical challenge and he's one of the most fulfilling choreographers I have ever worked with."

As a creator, Kudelka knows the importance of setting work on people to enhance their talents and he is bitter about Alexander Grant's reluctance to do this during his tenure at the National Ballet. "Grant's whole career happened because people created roles for him. He should have brought choreographers in to set works on Mary Jago—or me, for that matter—instead of the Ashton repertoire. It's important to work with live people and not a notator from England with the score of *The Dream!* It's more important to be a creator than an interpreter."

Members of the artistic directorship at Les Grands Ballets have nothing but praise for Kudelka's ability as a choreographer. "He's the most gifted person I've seen in a long time," says Linda Stearns, "and his work has touched every

dancer. His greatest gift is an uncanny ability to choose casts for his ballets. For example, he plucked Katia Breton from the corps for the second movement of *Alliances*, and she's wonderful. He also is capable of self-criticism. He knew that the third movement of *Alliances* was not originally as strong as the first two, and I respect that."

"James' work is incredibly inventive," remarks Daniel Jackson. "I don't feel that there's a Kudelka style yet, because he's still experimenting. Yet there is a kind of energy based on classical technique coupled with a sense of what modern dance is all about. You can say the same thing about James that has been said about Balanchine. His works are so deep that we can dream into them."

Equally impressive is Kudelka's professionalism in creating his works. "His ballets are all inside when he arrives at the studio," says Stearns. "James doesn't waste time, because his



Karen Kain, Tomas Schramek and Peter Ottmann in *The Rape of Lucrece*.

Barry Gray

Kudelka Talks About His Own Work

James Kudelka is probably as objective about his work as any critic and, in some cases, even harsher. The following are his own comments about some of his works:

Washington Square (1979)

I thought the ballet was boring with its sets and costumes. I just wanted to get down to dancing. Alexander Grant kept complaining that Morris and Catherine didn't have solos, so I had to redo it. In its last incarnation it was down to 50 minutes and was more theatrical.

I was glad when it was finished, because I had spent two years on the same story and I had no brain left. Every time it was shown, it was different.

The positive aspect was that for the first time I had to oversee a whole production, working with designers, composers and conductors.

The Rape of Lucrece (1980)

This was the first work I did for the National after the Banff experience and it was shown at a choreographic workshop. Something spilled out of me, and I found myself working in parallel placement instead of turn-out.

At first Lucrece was off pointe, but when Alexander Grant heard

that his ballerina Karen Kain was not going to be in pointe shoes, his face fell, and I had to change it.

It was a good piece and should have made the repertoire.

Playhouse (1980)

In retrospect, I can see that it was a biography about my relationship with the National Ballet. I tried to show the magic of the theatre colliding against jaded dancers who have lost their commitment. The lead—who was the impresario trying to rouse the dancers to action—was really me.

I had a terrible time with the dancers; they were afraid of the work because they couldn't figure it out.

I'd like to try to do it again, because I know there is a ballet there.

Hedda (1983)

I liked it, but it needed to be performed in a smaller space. I would have liked to work on it more, but I had left the company.

I hated the costumes, because it became an over-dressed Victorian production.

On the other hand, it got me into expressionism. In Hedda I created psychological elements that were non-narrative. It was abstract drama.

Candlelight Blues (1984)

Everyone who goes to Thailand plays something of the king's. He is a jazz composer. I set this piece to one of his tunes, for a gala.

It was light and chic, with nothing intellectual about it. Other people are more proud of it than I am. I think it's handy to show in shopping centres.

Alliances (1984)

Alexander Grant once told me to write down any music that I like. Apparently Frederick Ashton did that for NINETTE DE VALOIS. I heard a snatch of Brahms, from his First Piano Concerto, and I thought it was a most beautiful phrase of music. Having worked with live composers on the last few pieces, I thought it would be a relief to work with a record, but I didn't know what I was getting into. All of In Paradisum can fit into the first movement, and I had two movements to go.

I changed all the rules from In Paradisum, because I was afraid. It had been such a success. I needed something different. This piece was round—full of pirouettes, circles and cartwheels—whereas my other choreography had been square. It was emotional movement based on music, and I had never taken that risk before.

I dedicated the work to Betty Oliphant because it showed all the classical technique I had picked up at the School, stretched as far as it can go. I used classical technique—but as I wanted to, not in any classical way.

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images are well-prepared, and he is very organized.”

Jackson adds his observations: “I’ve never seen James alone in the studio working out a step. The invention is in his head already, allowing him to work for lengthy periods of time. He demonstrates steps and is very explicit and concrete when he physically does something. He is also quite verbal about the quality of movement he wants and gives strong images. For example, in creating *In Paradisum* he brought in books to show the hand or body shape he wanted in the death figures.”

The greatest conflict for Kudelka at Les Grands Ballets is the demand on him as a dancer. He is the first to admit that he is not as responsible as he should be about cultivating and nurturing a role—because he would rather be choreographing. “There aren’t a lot of choreographers who are principal dancers, and they need me for the classical works at Les Grands. I put my foot down, however, over a real classical work like *Giselle*. I would give a thoughtful performance, but it wouldn’t be on an international level. I’m not a virtuoso dancer. Even if the National Ballet School gave me ways of placement to fool the public, I would rather leave the princely roles to the guys that don’t have receding hairlines, a tight body and short arms. I also don’t have the jumps and the legs.

“I’ve made my dance career wearing shoes that fit—in other words, by performing roles that suit me. My preference is for the modern works, because they stretch and challenge me and make me sweat. The white pas de deux in *Les Patineurs* never made me sweat!

“Ironically, all the varied roles I’ve had at Les Grands have improved me as a dancer. I looked at my body in the white

tights I wore for *The Nutcracker* and I said to myself, ‘I don’t know these legs!’ ”

Daniel Jackson agrees that Kudelka feels more at home in the contemporary repertoire. “The meatiest works give him moral satisfaction because, when he is in a well-choreographed work, he enjoys seeing it from the inside.”

Linda Stearns is worried about the time when Kudelka will decide he no longer wants to dance. “Because I need him as a dancer, we have to challenge him with works. But I admire him because he gives 100 per cent; you never know onstage if he is disappointed in the choreography. His musicality—strong in his own creations—also carries over to his dancing, as do his wit and sense of humour. And no one is faster than James at picking up steps.”

When Anna Kisselgoff wrote about Canadian ballet in *The New York Times* recently, she pointed out that each of the major companies has someone special—the Royal Winnipeg Ballet has Evelyn Hart, the National Ballet has Erik Bruhn and Les Grands Ballets has James Kudelka. In a review of one of Kudelka’s works, she also noted that, in her estimation, Kudelka had the handle on choreography for the next 20 years.

The exciting thing about Kudelka is his age; at 28 he has a long career ahead of him, and the works he has produced so far are only the tip of the iceberg.

Perhaps the last word on Kudelka should come from the person who first gave him a chance to choreograph. Declares Betty Olyphant, “He’ll go far, our James!” •

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Dance Nova Scotia

A Decade of Growth

by Pamela Anthony

Pinned to walls in dance studios, shops and schools across Nova Scotia are copies of a glossy poster which proclaims Dance is for Everyone—Join the Movement. Pictured are a bewildering variety of dance activities—a highland dancer, complete with kilt; a young ballerina, caught in mid-leap; a costumed ballroom couple; a sinewy modern dancer. Young and old, amateur and professional, from tap to folk, the images somehow meld together.

The poster is printed by Dance Nova Scotia (DANS) and represents the mandate of this unique service organization for dance. Founded 10 years ago, DANS is still growing to meet the needs of Nova Scotia's active and diverse dance community.

In 1975 the Nova Scotia Department of Culture, Recreation and Fitness was setting up a group of provincially supported cultural federations. Meetings with representatives of the province's dance community resulted in the formation of DANS.

Conceived as an umbrella organization for Nova Scotia's diverse dance groups, DANS was to fulfill the need for an organized approach to dance activities and development, to provide administrative services and co-ordination, and to act as a representative voice to the public and government. Its mandate: to promote and encourage dance activities in Nova Scotia.

While the Department of Culture, Recreation and Fitness provides 90 per cent of the funding for DANS, the relationship is an arms-length one, with direction and policy formulated by a volunteer board of directors. From the beginning, DANS was structured to incorporate the individuals and groups it was designed to serve.

The task of the board, together with a salaried executive director and the DANS secretary, was to find a way to meet the needs of already existing members and to encourage and develop new members. The wide variety of dance interests throughout the province, as represented on the DANS poster, was to be served from a small office in Halifax.

The first executive director of DANS was Gunter Buchta, who was instrumental in developing the services for which



Dance Week 1983 is declared: Premier John Buchanan and young members of Nova Scotia's dance community with (back, left to right) Gunter Buchta and Kenneth McGrail.



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DANS is now well known. With his strong personality and unflinching commitment to dance, he brought several disparate elements together. His experiences as a student, a teacher, an amateur and a professional dancer all served to develop his perspective, and he used those experiences to develop DANS.

Buchta established two very important principles for DANS. The first was that *all* forms of dance be represented and developed. The second, and most important, was that dance be taken to communities throughout Nova Scotia.

To this end, he developed a leadership training program (whose outline has since been adapted by many other organizations). The program focuses on developing dance leadership in smaller and rural communities by training individuals on a consistent basis—upgrading their skills and knowledge and providing ongoing support. These individuals provide dance leadership within their own communities. The importance and effectiveness of this program have been proven repeatedly.

"The leadership program is one of our reasons for being," says DANS president Kenneth McGrail. "We have been extremely successful in this area. An interesting result of our success is that, as time passes, the need for leadership programs drops off in some communities. What we are seeing is the development of well-established leadership *within* the community—who provide the resources that DANS once did."

Through the leadership program, dance groups have developed solid footings across the province. The success of this grass-roots approach is centred on its steady commitment to the needs of the various members of the dance community.

DANS also serves its membership through an active workshop program, promoting excellence in teaching and performance. In workshops co-sponsored by DANS and local dance organizations, new teachers, disciplines and techniques are introduced on a regular basis.

Just as important as its active involvement in the teaching of dance is DANS' function as a resource centre for the entire dance community. Providing a network of information, administrative guidance and a library of printed materials and videos—as well as the answers to innumerable inquiries—DANS plays a supporting role for the students, teachers and

Gunter Buchta

Winner of international awards for ballroom dancing, famed as an innovative teacher and choreographer, Gunter Buchta is renowned as the Father of International Ballroom Dancing. He also founded the first Canadian Dance Festival, the national Canadian Dance Teachers' Association and the Corte Dance Club.

Severely wounded in World War II, Buchta originally became involved in dance as a form of physical therapy. Not only did he rehabilitate himself, he discovered a boundless talent and enthusiasm for dance.

In 1950 he arrived in Nova Scotia, where his ability as a teacher and choreographer quickly earned him an excellent reputation. A tireless worker, he organized several dancing clubs.

When Buchta joined *Don Messer's Jubilee*, a musical program broadcast on CBC television, his young square-dancers soon became famous as the Buchta Dancers. Millions of people from

administrators of every dance organization in the province.

Gunter Buchta's contribution was a critical factor in the evolution of DANS, and the results of his work have produced far-reaching effects. With his retirement, due to poor health, something of an era has passed.

The influx of new leadership has both invigorated DANS and posed new challenges for the organization. Buchta's background in ballroom, teaching and social dance served DANS well. Both the interim executive director, Beverly Miller, and the recently appointed executive director, Dianne Milligan, have firm roots in the dance community—for example, each has worked as company manager for Nova Dance Theatre—but their roots are radically different from those of Buchta.

Dianne Milligan's background is in administration and marketing, and she has an abiding interest in dance as a performing art. As executive director, she brings a new perspective to DANS. Firmly committed to the leadership and workshop programs, Milligan believes DANS can also assist the dance community with new services, more marketing and the development of a broader public profile.

Signs of a new direction for DANS are emerging: a redesigned and informative newsletter is reaching an even broader audience; brochures and posters are distributed province-wide; a performance art committee has been established.

Ken McGrail acknowledges the need for new types of assistance and explains that the board, with Milligan, is discussing and assessing how to help. "Our mandate remains the same," he says. "What we want to determine is how to best serve the membership."

DANS has been quietly undertaking an enormous task, with enormous success, for 10 years. Dance activity in Nova Scotia is exciting and diverse, and the assistance and influence of DANS is felt from amateur folk groups to professional dance theatre, from rural community centres to large dance schools in Halifax.

As it develops, Nova Scotia's dance community can be assured, in DANS, of a responsible and supportive umbrella organization. The diverse needs of the province's dance community may be bewildering at times, but they will be met. As the DANS poster reminds us, dance is for everyone. ●

most to coast admired the dazzling choreography and costumes which were designed by his wife, Irm Buchta).

Buchta's contribution to the success of the program was recognized in noted Canadian playwright John Grey's new work, *Das Messer's Jubilee*, which recently received its premiere at the Neptune Theatre in Halifax. Choreography for the show was created by Linda Elliot, a former member of the Buchta dancers.

For years Buchta worked as a dancer, instructor, choreographer and consultant throughout North America. He created several syllabi and is internationally recognized for the Buchta system of ballroom dance training.

In his work as executive director of DANS, he focused on the development and implementation of the leadership training program, a system which has been adapted to develop dance activity in many areas.

Gunter Buchta's active presence in the Nova Scotia dance community has been missed since his retirement. But his influence is still felt, and to many he remains Mr. Dance.

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Four for the Future:

Owen Montague, Jeremy Ransom, Rex Harrington and Serge Lavoie

by Pat Kaiser

Among the men travelling rapidly upward through the ranks of the National Ballet of Canada are Owen Montague, Jeremy Ransom, Rex Harrington and Serge Lavoie. The former two are second soloists; the latter two, members of the corps de ballet. All are in their early to mid '20s. All are products of the National Ballet School.

As part of its 1984 November season in Toronto, the National Ballet presented *A Tribute to George Balanchine*. The works performed—*Serenade*, *The Four Temperaments* and *Symphony in C*—are group works, not star vehicles. None is the property of one, two or three dancers. With Balanchine's choreography there can be no weak cogs in the machine, or the entire contraption falls apart.

During the week-long run of the Balanchine program, the company's corps members, soloists and principal dancers exchanged roles and intermingled freely onstage. Owen Montague shared the Phlegmatic variation in *The Four Temperaments* with first soloist John Alleyne and a role in the first movement (*Allegro Vivo*) of *Symphony in C* with principal dancers Gregory Osborne and Tomas Schramek. Jeremy Ransom alternated with principal dancer Kevin Pugh in the Melancholic variation from *The Four Temperaments*. Rex Harrington partnered Karen Kain in the second movement (*Adagio*) of *Symphony in C*.

"It was a different sort of 'high' for us," says Serge Lavoie. "Maybe on a level with the Nureyev appearance [in last year's *Sleeping Beauty* anniversary], but not the same way. That was a stand-back-and-admire sort of excitement. This was being part of the excitement. We were the excitement."

Lavoie's manner might be that of a very casual neighbour leaning over the back fence. Harrington's is that of a forthright, unguarded dramatist—a Heathcliff in oversized black hat and coat, carrying his own '40s *film noir* lighting with him. Ransom, often spotted at dance receptions with an elegant and generous swathing of scarf at his neck, is the true romantic of the group—calm on the outside, something worried on the inside.

And then there is Owen Montague, who exudes an air of practicality and laid-back self-effacement. His words are



Andrew Oxenham

Owen Montague and Barbara Smith in *L'Île Inconnue*, choreographed by Constantin Patsalas.



Jeremy Ransom and Karyn Tessmer in Rudi van Dantzig's *Four Last Songs*, performed at the National Ballet School's 25th anniversary gala in November 1984.

Andrew Oxenham

keen, sharp and measured; though you can almost hear the gears of calculation in action, a crafty, humorous edge frequently sneaks into his voice.

Already an onstage master of what can only be called the underplayed splash, he makes a regular habit of demonstrating why he has made off with medals in international competition. In 1979 he won a third in the junior division of the first International Ballet Competition in Jackson, Mississippi; two years later, a second in the junior division of the fourth Moscow International Ballet Competition, where he was also awarded the Moscow Ballet Prize of Excellence—a rare occurrence for a non-Soviet dancer.

Montague expresses little fondness for the Soviet flavour of life. "Moscow—I don't miss it! Officials and security look at you as if they might blast your head off. Out on the street the cars are all old, dark, '50s-looking. Women all wear the same dress. Just varying shades of dullness—same dress. No, thank you."

He joined the National Ballet in 1982. In 1983 Alina Gildiner of Toronto's *Globe and Mail* singled him out in Constantin Patsalas' *Oiseaux Exotiques*: "It was Montague's flawless solo of spiralling leaps and spins, performed with a strong, open spirit, that deservedly brought the house down." Of his performance as the jackal-headed Anubis in Glen Tetley's *Sphinx*, she wrote that it was "Montague's night".

In reviewing the National Ballet School's 25th anniversary celebration performance, Anna Kisselgoff of *The New York Times* took note of his work as the slick and shady Gypsy in Susana's *La Verbena (Gypsy Fair)* and the Ballet Master in Bournonville's *Conservatoire*. She wrote of his "charismatic presence and quicksilver style".

Montague manages rich portrayals in vignette-sized roles, executed with a minimum of fuss, and he has absolutely no explanation of where they come from, of how he builds them. Quizzed on the source of the compelling Gypsy in the Nathan Detroit fedora, he quips, "The hat. It came from the hat."

He insists his characterizations are just beginning to develop. Speaking of the Gypsy, he explains: "We had only eight rehearsals at the most. [In that situation] I just run through the moves and don't worry too much about the fine points. I tend to do this all the time, concentrating on the steps, just the steps. Well, poor Susana was tearing her hair, telling me, 'It needs more characterization.' And all I said was, 'You'll get it. Believe me, you'll get it.'"

She got it. At the last minute. Montague shrugs. "When I went onstage, I knew the important thing was to have a good time with the role. So I did." So did the audience.

He feels his first stab at *Sphinx*, truly an exercise in minimalism, was "very weak—it didn't come out true until the second year. I'm at the point now where I can go out and just do what has to be done for the audience, to hold back nothing."

Jeremy Ransom, who joined the company in 1980, is small, nimble, tidy—but no Wayne Sleep destined exclusively for Pucks, little brothers and general tiny-person-roles. His future as a leading man was secured with his 1982 appearance as Gennaro, opposite Sabina Allemann, in Peter Schaufuss' production of Bournonville's *Napoli*. William Littler of the *Toronto Star* wrote of his debut: "A remarkable performance—full of the bravery of a 21-year-old corps member suddenly finding the spotlight and discovering his ability to hold it."

"That light, breezy, throwaway Bournonville look. The first day of spring," Ransom recalls, a little wryly. "It nearly killed us. But it did make me lose my fear of being tired."

He recalls his childhood: "I was very emotional. [Before



Rex Harrington and Kim Lightheart in John McFall's *Components*.

Andrew Oxenham

my ballet days] I found school a dismal experience. I found the teacher really inadequate and I was more than willing to tell her so. I just wasn't an academic.

"My first years boarding at the National Ballet School were horrible in terms of homesickness. I cried; I carried on; I ranted and raved. But if I was asked, 'Do you want to stay?' I'd say, 'Absolutely.' Traumatized times."

Montague, Ransom, Harrington and Lavoie all boarded at the School; none feels that it was a goldfish bowl existence, as it has often been called. According to Montague, "If anything, it instilled an early sense of discipline and commitment that made us the envy of others. Eventually I figured that out. At Jarvis Collegiate, where we all went for science classes, we'd head past other students, 'normal people' on their way to becoming engineers or whatever. Of course we got the earnest looks. But then I realized these people hadn't had to reach the decisions we had, and that's why we weren't liked. We knew what we were working towards, and they didn't."

Subsequent time in Europe for each of the four marked a major surge in personal growth. Jeremy Ransom travelled on a Canada Council grant in 1979, and Europe turned into a magnificent obsession—not simply in terms of dance, but a fascination for a different way of life. He returns there every year—"at least once. I sell everything at the end of June, gather enough money together and just go."

Serge Lavoie joined a provincial company in Manchester, England, in the wake of the 1981 Moscow Competition. "I hadn't really done that well, but I did get a prize for partnering [Martine Lamy]," he says, pleased. "And anyway, just the experience of Moscow . . .!"

The Manchester company was hectic. "New pieces in the works all the time, performing all the time. I had an Oberon created on me in a three-act *Midsummer Night's Dream*."

His strong partnering is inspiration for the creative abilities of his peers. Fellow company member David Allan choreographed *Khatchaturian Pas de Deux* for Lavoie and Veronica Tennant for the 1984 Bermuda Festival.

"After being in the School for seven years, I was amazed at how naive I was," remarks Rex Harrington. "Europe really opened my eyes. I just hadn't known what the rest of the dance world was doing, the possibilities, what can exist."

Nevertheless, they all returned. Montague asserts: "We've got much here, and I want to be part of it and I want to do something for it." He knew he was joining the company at a crucial time, with artistic director Alexander Grant's tenure coming to a close and Erik Bruhn's about to begin. There was a certain insecure feeling of great expectations that was a tremendous draw for him.

Harrington, who joined the National Ballet later, "simply liked Erik's ideas". It was reason enough for him. His reflections on Europe, however, make him tough on the home front. He is fond of contemporary ballet and knows how the narrowness of Toronto audiences threatens to straitjacket repertoire.

Toronto audiences, he states, "don't like challenges. *Mixed programs are a challenge!* And so they don't work here. People need a plot, a synopsis on the book in front of them. They don't know what to do if there isn't a princess being kissed

awake. Not like in Europe. Not like in New York, either."

And then he pauses, smiles and admits to an ambition shared by his colleagues. "Sure, I want to be the prince, too. *Everyone* wants to be the prince,"—and Harrington's matinee-idol looks make him a shoo-in for Albrecht—"but sometimes I get annoyed when a *Corsaire Pas de Deux* gets all the crazed applause and the softer moments of an Albrecht or a Siegfried, which seem all that more important, don't get the deserved attention."

There will always be cheers for the circus turns; there will always be those to whom dance is sport, a circle of airborne high jumps equivalent to the winning goal. But this younger generation of dancers seems to be seeking, and finding, most



Serge Lavoie in the *Khatchaturian Pas de Deux*, choreographed by David Allan.

of its satisfaction in princes of Denmark, rather than of the open track.

Montague outlines his vision of the complete dancer: "Of course, no one style should dominate. I see it all as shadings. Shadings are so important, and no one is more vital than another in creating the complete picture. There's the aggressive side. Then, of course, there's the artistic, interpretive side at the opposite end. But there's everything in between, too—like a photograph, not black-black and white-white, but all those fine things in between that give detail and composition. That's what everyone here is going through right now. And we're no longer afraid of the light shades."

"I think of us as a bunch of purists," says Ransom, "and I hope people are satisfied with that, because that's what's here. Me, I always wanted to be a clean, fine dancer, first and fore-



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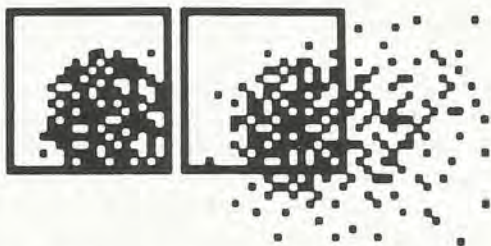
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most." Accordingly, he works towards emotional punch without fuss. In Rudi van Dantzig's *Four Last Songs*, Ransom's expression changes little, his arms and hands engage in no theatrics as he loses his love. He merely gazes after his partner a scant extra second, with an almost imperceptible tilt to his head, and it's enough.

In considering his Melancholic variation in *The Four Temperaments*, Ransom speaks of the necessity of "holding back" in his interpretation of the single male figure who periodically slumps to the floor, head bowed. "I worried, 'Oh no, I'm going overboard. *This isn't Camille!* Just do the steps.'"

He cites Erik Bruhn, Ivan Nagy and Anthony Dowell as ideals. "All cool dancers, not tricksters, nothing extra. But theatre beings, nonetheless."

Lavoie, very much a devotee of Rudolf Nureyev, sees himself "as a more athletic sort of dancer—my build dictates it" and judges it both a strength and a weakness. "It's hard to become 'soft'. A little too athletic at times when I need to come across as refined." Recalling his work in *Four Last Songs* at the School's anniversary performance, he insists, "That's where I especially need to develop."

"Dowell—very much Dowell. And Bortoluzzi," says Harrington thoughtfully. But he does not see himself as a classicist—"not at all". He recognizes his partnering skills, a strength prominent enough that he has found himself partnering Karen Kain in such works as *Oiseaux Exotiques* and *The Four Temperaments*. Last fall they danced the balcony pas de deux from *Romeo and Juliet* in performance with the Hamilton Philharmonic.

Roles that hinge strongly on acting, as well as partnering, interest him, and he refers to John Cranko's *Romeo* as something "I could really sink my teeth into". His distaste for roles relying on splashy pyrotechnics likely is linked to his insecurity about his technical level.

Earlier in his training, Harrington had visions of becoming a contemporary dancer. "I figured I wouldn't have to spend all my time buried in double tours, entrechats six and so on, having to pound them out, over and over. But the technique is becoming more, and I'm beginning to enjoy myself on-stage."

He recalls his surprise upon discovering he was cast in the National Ballet's upcoming production of the third act of *Raymonda*. "It's pure classical," he says in disbelief. "Now, I enjoyed the Balanchine evening; it's neo-classical stuff. There's control, but it isn't so rigid. You can throw yourself around. But *Raymonda!*" He shakes his head and laughs. "Oh well, I'm game for anything."

They can all be game for anything, because their boss, Erik Bruhn, is. In *Bold Steps*, a recent television documentary about the National Ballet, Bruhn said of the company, "The potential was there; it needed a little push."

This season, with the acquisition of *Realm* from David Earle, one of the co-founders of Toronto Dance Theatre, and *Blue Snake* by Robert Desrosiers, a graduate of the National Ballet School, Bruhn is introducing new choreography from outside the boundaries of the ballet vocabulary into the company's repertoire.

Montague is ready and willing. "Desrosiers' ideas are so incredible, so beyond . . . anything," he says, nearly at a loss for words. "All I can say is that all of it can only add; it can't take away." •

Photographs courtesy of the National Ballet of Canada and the National Ballet School.

In Review: Books

Deep Song: The Dance Story of Martha Graham

by Ernestine Stodelle

Schirmer Books (Collier-MacMillan Canada, Inc.), 1984

Reviewed by Leland Windreich

Ten years after the publication of Don McDonagh's biography of Martha Graham, Ernestine Stodelle offers a different kind of study, with a more mature insight. A former Humphrey-Weidman dancer and, since 1929, a witness to Graham's creative evolution, Stodelle focuses on Graham's works, making use of her own excellent memory and that of many colleagues.

She is surely the critic best equipped to assess the revivals of Graham's dances and to demonstrate differences, at various points in time, in both style and attack.

A few of Graham's works are described in detail, and one longs for more studies of dances now rarely seen. The influences and contributions of three men in Graham's personal

and professional spheres—composer Louis Horst, dancer Erick Hawkins and designer-sculptor Isamu Noguchi—are studied in depth. There are lively accounts of Graham's collaborations with the ballet establishment.

Deep Song will answer many questions posed by the scholar and will serve the uninitiated better than anything on Martha Graham now in print.

The Physics of Dance

by Kenneth Laws, with photographs by Martha Swope
Schirmer Books (Collier-MacMillan Canada, Inc.), 1984

Reviewed by Mary Jago

For years people have tried to analyze how it is that male dancers seem to be able to hover in the air while jumping, or how it is that female dancers can jump, balance and do mul-



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multiple turns *en pointe*. The simple answer is good dance training.

In *The Physics of Dance*, Kenneth Laws analyzes classical ballet technique and breaks it down into equations which, unfortunately, mean nothing to a dancer or teacher who does not have a background in physics.

Certainly one should never close the door on learning and attempting to understand new perspectives in classical dance, because ultimately this is how the art form is enriched. No doubt, the greater the teacher's knowledge and understanding, the higher the quality of dance passed on to the dancer. But Law's revelations are too esoteric for most.

For those in the medical profession with an interest in dancers, their training and their injuries, however, this book would be most beneficial reading. One weakness in classical dance is the limitation in the understanding of dancers' injuries. In his detailed analyses of dance movements, Laws explains how these movements work—and what happens when they don't. A mistake or a minor misjudgment often leads to injury. Dancers' muscles, ligaments and tendons are so finely tuned that they really do require special treatment and care.

While the medical profession has made great strides in diagnosing and treating dancers' injuries, knowledge of the causes of these injuries remains limited. This is where *The Physics of Dance* could prove most useful.

(Mary Jago, a former principal dancer with the National Ballet of Canada, joined the company's artistic staff as ballet mistress in 1984.)

**Dancing, A Journal Devoted to the Terpsichorean Art,
Physical Culture and Fashionable Entertainments**

A facsimile reprint.

Press of Terpsichore Limited, 1984

Reviewed by Cliff Collier

It is often stated that the journals of a period are the best resources for researching the interests and trends of their time. It is in the periodical that the newest theories are introduced—and their *pros* and *cons* thoroughly debated—usually long before books on the subject appear in print.

As popular as dancing was in the 18th and 19th centuries, there was not to be a journal devoted exclusively to the subject until near the end of the 19th century. The history of the dance journal is still vague, but it appears that *Dancing* was one of the first of its kind, and certainly the first in Great Britain.

This scarcely known journal does not appear in any of the standard reference books or major bibliographies—including the dance researcher's "bible", *The Dictionary Catalog of the New York Public Library Dance Collection*. But a full run of *Dancing*, in excellent condition, was discovered in a second-hand book shop in England and has been reproduced, in facsimile, by Toronto's Press of Terpsichore.

The dance personalities of the time emerge from its pages. Some are well-known, even today; others are now lost in obscurity—like Robert Morris Crompton, the editor of *Dancing*, about whom, outside of these pages, little can be found.

For the dance researcher, the re-appearance of *Dancing* is a boon, and publisher Bob Williams has made it more so with the addition of six indices, allowing easy access to the names and subjects mentioned within. One can look for ballrooms or bands, dance titles, ballets or the names of those who danced or choreographed them. ●

In Review: Film



One of the high points in *That's Dancing*—Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire in “Pick Yourself Up”, a number from *Swing Time*.

That's Dancing

Written and directed by Jack Haley Jr
Produced by David Niven Jr and Jack Haley Jr
MGM-UA, 1985

Reviewed by Michael Crabb

Only the magic of Hollywood could turn something as potentially promising as a compilation of dance on film into something as inherently tedious as *That's Dancing*. It comes

from MGM-UA, which brought us *That's Entertainment* and *That's Entertainment: Part Two*. Make no mistake, however; this latest foray into the film archives of Tinsel Town and beyond is not entertaining.

Where its predecessors had no more exalted aim than to recall some of the great moments of Hollywood musicals, *That's Dancing* aspires to the level of a genuine documentary, complete with high-minded narration by the likes of Gene Kelly (who also served as the film's executive producer), Mikhail Baryshnikov and Sammy Davis Jr.

The real core of *That's Dancing*—given its provenance—is, naturally, the Hollywood musical. Since, however, many of the most celebrated dance routines from that rich cinematic motherlode had already been mined for the two *That's Entertainment* films, *That's Dancing* often has to make do with scraps or second-best. For example, instead of Gene Kelly doing his fabulous solo to the title song from *Singin' in the Rain*, we have an amusing, but not nearly so memorable alternative in the same movie's “Moses” number, with Kelly and Donald O'Connor.

There are, in fact, a number of high points in *That's Dancing* which, if freed from Jack Haley's awkward attempts to give order and significance to a disparate collection of dance routines, would be amusing enough to watch: Shirley Temple and Bill “Bojangles” Robinson in an improvised number from *The Littlest Rebel*; Eleanor Powell spinning like crazy in *Broadway Melody of 1936*; and, needless to say, the divine Fred and Ginger doing just about anything.

It's when *That's Dancing* tries to make intellectual sense of itself that it becomes a bore. A strained section entitled “The

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World of Ballet", despite snippets of Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan and Anna Pavlova, seems quite out of place. How can Fonteyn and Nureyev, captured onstage in *Le Corsaire* (in a clip from *An Evening with the Royal Ballet*), look anything but a little ridiculous up against dance designed specifically for the film medium? After all, Busby Berkeley raised vulgarity and bad taste to the level of true art.

Dance lovers, of course, will want to see *That's Dancing*—and rightly so. Ballet dancers and modern dancers alike have much to learn about sheer artistry from some of the old Broadway and Hollywood hoofers. For the general audience, however, a string of dance routines—however brilliant, individually—becomes tedious when the numbers are removed from their context as part of that fragile confection known as the film musical. ●

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The Dance in Canada Association and Dance Nova Scotia (DANS) will serve as co-hosts for the 13th annual **Dance in Canada Conference**, to be held in Halifax, June 25-30.

Co-sponsored by the Dance in Canada Association and the Canadian Association of Professional Dance Organizations (CAPDO), the **Dancer Transition Project** has been established in Toronto. A seven-month implementation period has been made possible through grants from the Department of Communications, the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council and the Laidlaw Foundation.

The Dancer Transition Project is directed by Joysanne Sidimus, a former principal dancer with the National Ballet of Canada, and aims to establish a permanent centre which will provide a variety of services and resources (including career counselling, aptitude testing, retraining grants, career-research libraries and dance-related job listings) for dancers whose performing careers have come to an end.

Experts—many of them former dancers—from Canada and the United States will assemble in Toronto, April 12-13, for a conference focusing on career transition for dancers.

Further information is available from the Dancer Transition Project, 834 Yonge Street, Suite 206, Toronto, Ontario M4W 2H1. (416) 928-9177.

The third **National Choreographic Seminar** will be held at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, May 27-June 22, 1985.

Sponsored by the Dance in Canada Association and the University's Centre for the Arts, the seminar is being organized by Grant Strate, director of the Centre.

Robert Cohan, director of London Contemporary Dance Theatre, will return as one of the choreographic directors. Composer Michael J. Baker will be musical director.

The dancers, choreographers, composers, musicians and actors chosen to participate in the seminar will spend



Jerry Davidson

Karen Jamieson Dance Company will appear at Montreal's *International Festival of New Dance* in September.

four weeks in residence at the Centre, involved in the development of new works.

Previous choreographic seminars have been held at Toronto's York University (1978) and the Banff Centre (1980).

Maria Formolo will perform her solo program, *The Beast Under the Bed (or . . . Little Girls Aren't What They Used To Be)*, at Dancers Studio West in Calgary, May 4, and the Chinook Theatre in Edmonton, May 23-26.

This summer's *Festival of the Arts* at the **Banff Centre** will feature performances of John Cranko's *Pineapple Poll*; *Canto Indio* and *Double Quartet*, by Brian Macdonald (head of the Centre's summer dance program); and a new work by Constantin Patsalas, winner of the 1985 Clifford E. Lee Choreography Award.

Among the international faculty members announced for the summer dance program are Laura Alonso (Cuba), Dierdre Tarrant (New Zealand), Rhett Dennis (United States) and, from Canada, Susan Toumine, Kathryn Brown, Clinton Rothwell and Annette av Paul.

The Yevshan Ukrainian Folk Ballet Ensemble of Saskatoon is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

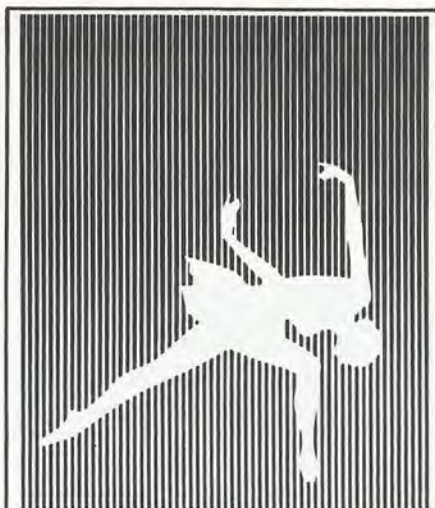
This year's spring tour itinerary for the **Royal Winnipeg Ballet** included two new stops: Yellowknife, in the Northwest Territories, and Anchorage, Alaska.

During the March season in Winnipeg, the company was scheduled to present its first performances of Maurice Béjart's *Song of a Wayfarer*, featuring guest artist Jean Charles Gil, a



Patrick Hattenberger

Nicola Norberg Follows, chairman of the 1986 Dance in Canada Conference, to be held in Vancouver.



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Members of Contemporary Dancers Canada in Dan Wagoner's *In Spiked Sonata*.
In May the company will present the *Festival of Canada Modern Dance* in Winnipeg.

principal dancer with Roland Petit's
Ballet National de Marseille.

Soloist Mark Lanham, a bronze
medal winner at the second Interna-
tional Ballet Concours in Tokyo and
the International Ballet Competition in
Jackson, Mississippi, has been pro-
moted to principal dancer. Prior to join-
ing the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in 1984,
he danced with Ballet El Paso, the San
Francisco Ballet and Ballet West.

**Margie Gillis, Desrosiers Dance
Theatre, Karen Jamieson Dance
Company, O Vertigo Danse,
Toronto Dance Theatre, Judith
Marcuse Dance Projects and Con-
temporary Dancers Canada** are
scheduled to perform at the *Festival of
Canadian Modern Dance*, to be held in
Winnipeg, May 15-25. The Festival is
being presented by Contemporary
Dancers Canada.

As part of its *Dance and Community
Awareness Program*, **Spindrift Dance
Theatre** appeared at various locations
in the Kingston, Ontario, region during
February and March. The objective of
the company's artistic director, Charles
Mathieu Brunelle: to bring modern
dance to audiences who had not been
exposed to this art form previously.
Funding for the program came from a
Canada Works Grant.

Dancemakers celebrates its 10th anni-
versary season with performances at
Toronto's Premiere Dance Theatre in
April. The company will present new
works by Carol Anderson and Conrad

Alexandrowicz, plus a revival of Anna
Blewchamp's *Arrival of All Time*.
Among guest artists will be former
company directors Andrea Smith, Pa-
tricia Miner and Peggy Smith Baker.

Following the Toronto engagement,
Dancemakers begins a European tour
which will include performances in
Paris (as part of *Danse Ontario Au-
jourd'hui*), Clermont-Ferrand, Cardiff,
Stirling, Darlington and Dundee.

Toronto Dance Theatre will make its
debut at the Brooklyn Center for the
Performing Arts in New York, April



Onstage following a performance of *The
Tin Soldier* given by the National Tap
Dance Company of Canada at the 1985
Bermuda Festival: (left to right) Lady Mary
Dunrossil; Viscount Dunrossil, Governor
of Bermuda; Heather Ronald and William
Orlowski of the National Tap Dance
Company; Viscountess Dunrossil; and
Steve Dymond, executive director of the
Dance in Canada Association.



Andrew Oxenham

The National Ballet of Canada in Robert Desrosier's *Blue Snake*, designed by Jerrard Smith. The work received its premiere during the company's winter season in Toronto.

17-21. The company will open the Center's *Dance Canada Festival*.

Canadian Children's Dance Theatre is scheduled to present new works by Pam Tate, Murray Darroch and Deborah Lundmark during its annual season at Toronto's Winchester Street Theatre in April.

Jeff Hyslop has been cast in this year's Stratford Festival production of *The Pirates of Penzance*, directed and choreographed by Brian Macdonald. The production opens at the Avon Theatre in late May.

The **National Ballet of Canada** returns to Europe this spring for a six-week tour, with performances in Luxembourg (May 13-14), Berlin (May 17-18), Ludwigshafen (May 20-22), Leverkusen (May 23), Weisbaden (May 25-26), Zurich (May 28-29), Stuttgart (June 2-3), Munich (June 6-7), Milan (June 11-18) and Amsterdam (June 21-22).

Repertoire for the tour includes *Don Quixote*, choreographed by Nicholas Beriozoff and newly designed by Desmond Heeley; Terry Westmoreland's new staging of *Raymonda Act III*; *L'Ille Inconnue* and *Canciones*, by resident

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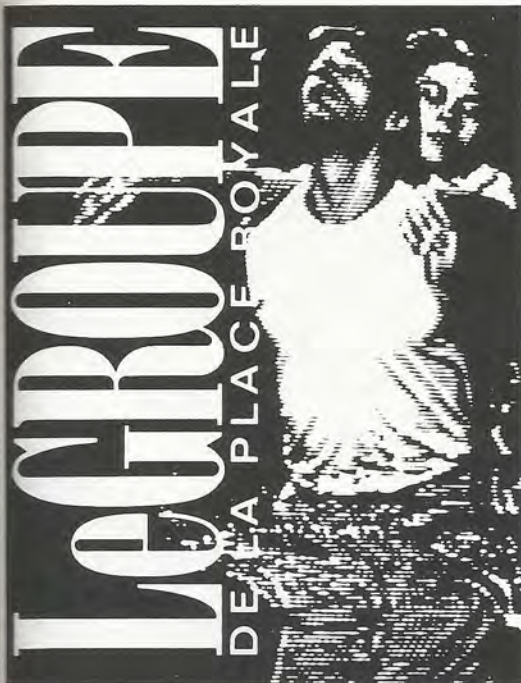
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Members of Nova Dance Theatre in Jeanne Robinson's *Grecia*, to be presented during the company's spring performances in Halifax.

choreographer Constantin Patsalas; Glen Tetley's *Sphinx*; *Components*, by John McFall; and Kenneth MacMillan's *Elite Syncopations*.

The company has announced plans for its 1985-86 performances at Toronto's O'Keefe Centre. Repertoire for the fall season includes *Don Quixote* (with guest artists Cynthia Gregory and Fernando Bujones of American Ballet Theater), *L'Île Inconnue*, *Sphinx*, *Elite Syncopations* and *Onegin* (with guest artist Reid Anderson of the Stuttgart Ballet).

A highlight of the February season

will be the world premiere of a new work by Glen Tetley. *La Bayadère Act II* and *La Fille Mal Gardée* will also be presented.

The world premiere of a new work by Danny Grossman will be featured during the spring season, which begins April 30. The company will also perform *The Dream* and *Swan Lake* (with guest artist Jonas Kage of the Zurich Ballet).


Two programs were scheduled for March performances by **Les Grands Ballets Canadiens** in Montreal. On the

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first weekend, March 21-23: James Kudelka's new production of *Dracula*, featuring guest artist Margie Gillis; a new piece by Christopher House; Linda Rabin's *Avec Brahms; Nobody's Business*, by Danny Grossman; and *Pour Brad*, a work by former principal dancer Edward Hillyer that was first performed at the July 1983 choreographic workshop. On the second weekend, March 28-30: Terry Westmoreland's new staging of *Raymonda Act III; Seascope*, by Judith Marcuse; and Brian Macdonald's *Findings*.

The company will travel to Europe this summer, performing at Spoleto's *Festival of Two Worlds* (July 4-7) and the Athens Festival (July 11-14).

Susan Macpherson will perform at the Centre Pompidou in Paris during April.

Brian Macdonald has been invited to Moscow as a jury member for the fifth International Ballet Competition, to be held June 10-27.

The first *International Festival of New Dance* will be held in Montreal, Sep-

tember 19-29, 1985. Among international companies scheduled to appear are Germany's **Wuppertal Tanztheater**, directed by Pina Bausch; the **Merce Cunningham Dance Company** from New York; and Tokyo's **Muteki Sha Dance Company**. Choreographers to be featured include London's **Ian Spink** and **Karole Armitage** of New York.

Canadian participants announced include **Jean-Pierre Perrault; LA LA LA Human Steps**, directed by Edouard Lock; **Desrosiers Dance Theatre; Fortier Danse-Création**; and Vancouver's **Karen Jamieson Dance Company**.

Nova Dance Theatre will present its spring season at the Dalhousie Arts Centre in Halifax, April 25-27. The program will feature new works by Francine Boucher and artistic director Jeanne Robinson. Two works from the company's repertoire—*Pontoon*, by Duncan Holt, and *House Pets*, by Jennifer Mascall—will also be performed.

Following its Halifax appearance, the company will tour Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. ●

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Letters to the Editor

I was very pleased to read about the gift of the Russian ballet costume to the Royal Ontario Museum [*Dance in Canada*, Issue Number 42]. Mrs. Potts is to be commended for her conscientious act in ensuring the preservation of this piece of dance history.

I am writing to express my concern for the impending loss of our own theatrical dance heritage.

Canadian theatrical dance first developed a profile 50 years ago when Boris Volkoff and his company were asked to appear at the 1936 Olympic Dance Festival in Berlin. The growth and development of dance over the next two decades was outstanding, culminating in the Canadian Ballet Festivals held from 1948 to 1953. Canadian choreographers presented over 100 original works, many using original music scores, in the period between 1930 and 1950. This was the period when the foundations for what is now a flourishing Canadian dance scene were established.

There are numerous horror stories of lost sets, costumes, choreographic notes, programs, films, photographs, etc. Valuable artifacts were lost in the

devastating fires in the Winnipeg Ballet's storage rooms (1951) and in Boris Volkoff's studio (1972).

At this moment, Nesta Toumine, who directed and choreographed for the Ottawa Classical Ballet Company, is being forced to vacate her studio. Her storage room is filled with sets, props and costumes that go back to the late '40s. There is nowhere to store these irreplaceable items.

What is required to stop any further losses is a National Dance Archive, where our dance heritage can be preserved and made available to Canadian dance writers and researchers and the general public. The task is formidable; however, if we are not to deprive future generations of their roots, action must be taken swiftly to ensure that our theatrical dance history is secured.

I am preparing an action plan with the aim of initiating a drive to found a National Dance Archive, and would be pleased to hear from any *Dance in Canada* readers who would be interested in pursuing this vitally important project.

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Toronto, Ontario



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