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Dance in Canada Danse au

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COVER: Choreographer-director Brian Macdonald, recipient of the 1985 Canada Dance Award, with Prime Minister and Mrs. Brian Mulroney and President and Mrs. Ronald Reagan, backstage after the "Shamrock Summit" gala performance in Quebec City on March 17. (*Photograph courtesy of the Office of the Prime Minister*)

Contemporary Dancers Canada
New Directions

by Richard Forzley

Many of the leaders of the modern dance movement have been women, most with a touch of the evangelist about them. Winnipeg has its own modern dance evangelist—Philadelphia-born Rachel Browne, founding artistic director of Contemporary Dancers Canada (formerly known as Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers).

When she first arrived from New York in 1957, Browne had no intention of directing a modern dance company, or of choreographing in the modern dance idiom. She spent five years as a soloist with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, then retired to raise a family. In 1964, her need to dance unabated and still unfulfilled, she founded Contemporary Dancers.

Within six years Browne's small group of dancers had become a fully professional dance company, with a full-time manager and an operating grant from the Canada Council. By 1973 Contemporary Dancers had its own school, which fed the main body of the company and served as an educational tool for the community at large.

Because Contemporary Dancers was one of the pioneers of Canadian modern dance, touring many small prairie communities, its choreographic philosophy initially was focused on well-balanced and entertaining programs, rather than on the wildly esoteric or experimental. The company's *raison d'être*, as Browne saw it, was to communicate, educate and entertain as wide an audience as possible. She felt that having a repertoire which reflected a variety of dance styles, by various choreographers, was the best way to reach audiences unaccustomed to modern dance.

From the beginning Rachel Browne invited outside dancers and choreographers to work with the company—for pragmatic, as well as artistic, reasons. "I wasn't interested in being solely responsible for the entire program," she explains. "First of all, the practical part of me said that it's not going to make as good a program to have five or six works by Rachel Browne—that it might be more pleasing to audiences who haven't seen lots of modern dance before to have works of many different kinds. Also, I was doing everything and simply didn't have the energy to make a whole program of works.

"I didn't feel that I had that large, large talent around which an entire company could be based," she continues. "Had I been even more isolated, or had I not worked with people who wanted to choreograph, it might have evolved into the Rachel Browne Company."

Among the diverse choreographers represented in Contemporary Dancers' repertoire are Bill Evans, Doris Humphrey, Cliff Keuter, José Limón, Brian Macdonald, Norman Morrice, Robert Moulton, Linda Rabin, Paul Sanasardo, Lynn Taylor-Corbett, Norbert Vesak, Dan Wagoner and James Waring—to name only a few.

Speaking of her own work as a choreographer, Browne says: "In the beginning I didn't have any specific choreographic interests. I simply wanted to dance. I had listened to some music by Odetta—I adored it—and the first piece that came out was a series of dances to a suite of her songs. Once it came out of me, and I saw what I had done, and liked it, I thought, 'Why not try some more?' "

As the company grew, Browne's interests as a choreographer developed. "Because I was so gung-ho to dance and, once I started to create, to make pieces, I was a fanatic—as fanatical about making dances as I was about dancing."

She attempted to add more meaningful dances to the repertoire and build a program that wasn't simply an outlet for her own personal expression. "I was interested in communication, and not just making dances which were only satisfying for me to do in a room by myself.

"I also unconsciously started to challenge myself with different types of choreography—even using different types of music. I've always been a lover of music, so I had a good knowledge of many composers in modern, jazz and classical."

Originally trained as a classical ballet dancer—one of her teachers was Antony Tudor—Browne remembers "not liking modern dance very much. It looked strange to me. How-

Rachel Browne and members of Contemporary Dancers Canada in *The Woman I Am*. Choreographed by Rachel Browne, the work is based on a suite of poems by Dorothy Livesay.

Gaile Peturrson-Hiley, Mark Chambers, D-Anne Kuby and Tedd Robinson in Stephanie Ballard's *Prairie Song*.

ever, one of my first professional jobs was with a company called the New York Dance Drama Company, and this company did a mixture of both modern and ballet. That's really where I got my first modern training."

Later, she recalls, "when I started to choreograph, I didn't set out with the idea to start a modern dance company, or only choreograph in the modern idiom. But the things that came out were modern dance expressions, and I realized where I was at, and where my emotional feel was. Then I proceeded to very consciously learn several modern techniques. I started to make annual trips to New York to study with Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham and José Limón. I realized that, although I was choreographing in the modern dance idiom, I knew very little about the technique. So I went about learning it."

Although working in a new dance form, Browne has never abandoned her ballet roots, or her indebtedness to the ballet people in her past. Arnold Spohr, artistic director of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, was supportive from the very beginning, giving valuable artistic advice and occasionally lending male dancers to her company.

She speaks about the connection between the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Contemporary Dancers: "There are probably some similarities—because we are both based in Winnipeg and because one of my very intense dance experiences was working with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Arnold Spohr. I'm sure that I've been influenced by much in my background. I don't want to take away from the very positive influences of a number of people—people I learned from; however, the company was really quite an independent sort of creature. We are quite separate. Especially now, when you look at our audience and our direction."

That direction has always been true to experimentation—the very core of modern dance. A reaching out for new and innovative ways to communicate ideas and emotions to an audience. The company's repertoire represents an attempt to build a program combining the best of modern dance classics—pieces by Humphrey and Limón, for example—with experimental types of work.

Among the young choreographers of promise who have been invited to set works on the company are Judith Marcuse and Karen Jamieson. For Rachel Browne, there was "a responsibility to help develop [a] person's work in the hope that that would help develop our company in terms of new and original work created on the dancers."

The real need, however, was to find and develop choreographic talent within the ranks of the company. The in-studio choreographic workshops, begun in 1976, gave company dancers a chance to create and present their work to an audience. From these workshops have emerged Tedd Robinson, the company's resident choreographer and, since 1984, its artistic director; Stephanie Ballard, a former associate artistic director of the company and 1984 winner of the Jean A. Chalmers Award in Choreography; and Ruth Cansfield, a member of the company and budding choreographic talent. Each has been given the opportunity to explore ideas in dance and develop a unique character and style.

With all of this happening around her. Rachel Browne has

David Cooper

Tedd Robinson, artistic director of Contemporary Dancers Canada, in his own production of *Attitudes of Risk and Uncertainty*.

Stephanie Ballard and Kenneth Lipitz, former associate artistic directors of the company, in Rachel Browne's *The Woman I Am*.

become much more selective about her own choreography, about the kinds of dances that she wants to do. "Instead of just filling up a program," she says, "I decided to make only dances that I felt a major urge to do. I made a number of duets, one year after another. *Just About Us, Interiors*—both were collaborations with musician Jim Donahue. Another duet that I made was *The Other*, with [former company associate artistic director] Ken Lipitz, based on poems by Dorothy Livesay.

"I became very interested in using the spoken word—sometimes read over a tape, sometimes spoken live. Not always successfully, but nevertheless experimenting in this direction. I also made a dance to a whole suite of poems by Dorothy Livesay, called *The Woman I Am*."

Browne's latest work, *To the New Year*, was presented in Winnipeg at the *Best of the Rep*, the company's 20th anniversary celebration in March 1985. A personal and powerful message piece, it presents her as earth-mother, life-source and evangelist, all wrapped up in one.

With original music, poetry, dance and projected visuals, the theatricality works, and moves her in a new choreographic direction. "The change didn't come about without lots of small changes all along the way," she explains. "I think that I was moving in that direction. There were several dances that I made, using the spoken word and talking about large subjects, that were seeds for this dance."

Is Rachel Browne's bold new work somehow connected to the recent appointment of Tedd Robinson as artistic director of Contemporary Dancers Canada? Has his vivid theatricality rubbed off on those working around him?

Rachel Browne comments: "I see a real growing in the direction of taking more chances, being more daring in terms of the kind of work we set on the company. Being less conservative, a little bolder. I'm sure that not all these programs are going to please all the audiences. But, at the same time, I think there are going to be people that are going to get very excited about something—about some of the experimentation that they see. I don't think that everything will suddenly make an about-face and become very esoteric, or anything like that.

"I think that Tedd's interest—and mine—has always been a lot of theatricality, and that often helps to make a dance much more accessible and interesting to an audience, even if they don't know what's happening in the choreography. That's less important if they feel a real connection, on some level, with what's happening on the stage. I think Tedd has a feel for getting those kinds of dances into the repertoire. The choreographers he's chosen for this season are the real leaders—all kinds of wild and *wonderful* dancing."

Tedd Robinson was born in Ottawa. He joined Contemporary Dancers Canada in 1979. His sensibilities and theatricality, as they relate to his own choreographic direction, are decidedly of the 19th century. His personal preference is for the full-evening work—not necessarily a full-length work, but a series of shorter works, connected by a thematic, continuous fibre.

He comments on the state of modern dance: "We've gotten more conservative over the past few years, basically competing with the ballet. We need to make an audience for ourselves."

Incorporating "movement from popular culture" with music that reflects the energy and rebellion all around us, Robinson makes dance "a continually malleable thing that reflects the times".

Ruth Cansfield in Norbert Vesak's *Gift To Be Simple*.

Some of his dances present a rather dire vision of humanity; some are almost belligerently unintelligible. There is something potently non-specific in Robinson's work, which is impressive for its ritual drama, for the emphatic thrust of the choreography. Pared-down movement, all vital to the composition, coupled with grandiose, almost Wagnerian theatrics.

His dances ultimately challenge us to find our own answers to the mysteries he sets out before us. "I don't feel it's my job to give answers, only to provoke thought," he explains. "I resolve things choreographically, but not intellectually."

An important factor in these lean, mean days of economic cut-backs is the popularity of Robinson's work with audiences. With his bold pursuit of dance as theatre and his affinity for performance art, he creates exciting and memorable evenings of highly original work.

In a world where art is business, any artistic director has a tall order to fill: artistic excellence combined with viable, money-making programs. Robinson's approach is to bring "art to commercialism, not commercialism to art".

What is Tedd Robinson's long-term view of Contemporary Dancers Canada? "I see the company being a stronghold of Canadian choreography," he has written. "Not exclusively Canadian, but a natural event as the result of the substantial growth and development of the independent choreographic scene in Canada." •

Ballet and Opera:
A Complex Pas de deux

by Giuliana Gattoni

The lights dim before the heavy gold and red velvet curtain, and the first strains of the overture rise from the orchestra pit at La Scala. Behind that curtain, an entire world is waiting to spring into action: singers, chorus members, extras, stagehands and a full corps de ballet.

When Milan's old Teatro Ducale was burned to cinders in 1776, it took little more than two years before the new La Scala, with ample backstage facilities for scenery and rehearsal studios for both singers *and* dancers, was inaugurated.

In 1813 the management of La Scala opened a ballet school to train dancers, just as it was cultivating promising new singers, for the opera house.

Hand-in-hand, ballet and opera grew and flourished in opera houses throughout Europe. In North America, however, the mingling of the two disciplines—so natural in Europe—has been sustained with some difficulty.

In Toronto, the National Ballet of Canada and the Canadian Opera Company have survived side-by-side—but independently—for some 30 years, against all odds (not the least of which is the lack of a suitable opera house).

"At one time," recalls Tomas Schramek, a principal dancer with the National Ballet, "the National had three groups: a 'home' company, a touring group and a group that performed with the Opera when the others were on tour."

More recently, chances for the National Ballet's dancers to participate in Canadian Opera Company productions have been less frequent. According to Philip Boswell, artistic administrator of the Canadian Opera Company, "the two seasons [those of the ballet and opera companies] must be kept well apart—what with sharing the same theatre, [which] does not have the facilities necessary to alternate or rotate shows.

"It follows that the National is on tour when we are performing at the O'Keefe Centre. The trend for major ballet companies has been to take on tour full-length productions that require the presence of the full corps de ballet, [with] no dancers to spare for the opera.

"The National Ballet School has lent us some excellent dancers, as was recently the case when we produced *Death in Venice* for the Toronto International Festival in 1984.

"But mostly we have to rely on our own dancers. We screen them with the help of the choreographer, and by now we have a handful of good professional dancers we can call on. Unfortunately there are not too many good classical dancers who work freelance.

"Erik Bruhn [artistic director of the National Ballet] has shown he is most eager to help, but a full-scale collaboration is still far away."

Good dancing in opera productions is often hard to come by. Schramek talks about some of the problems: "You cannot hire principals to do a background sort of work, and ballet in opera rarely offers an opportunity for a solo or a pas de deux. It is important, but more in terms of music and atmosphere. It is the producer's idea that should be brought alive onstage, not the choreographer's.

"Recently Nadia Potts and I had a taste of that when we danced in *The Merry Widow*. The whole pas de deux had been choreographed *en pointe*. [It takes place] at Chez Maxim, and the producer quite rightly asked for it to be changed to a character dance—at the staging rehearsal, just before the opening!

"And hiring principals is also a very costly affair. Unless the opera specifically requires it, it isn't really worth while."

But dancing in opera is fun, according to Schramek. "In *Carmen* there were two different casts of singers, so I danced with both the sopranos. It was really like dancing with two different partners and trying to make them both look good—though neither of them could really dance. But they loved it; they admire so deeply somebody who can do a different thing with music than what they do, like moving with it instead of singing. And they enjoy the dancing enormously."

Charles Kirby, also a principal dancer with the National Ballet, has choreographed many opera productions. He trained originally as an opera singer. "I really have a feeling for both sides," he explains. "It's easy for me to identify with both the singers and the dancers in the opera."

As a choreographer, his association with the Canadian Opera Company dates back to 1966, when he was asked to stage the ballroom scene in *La Traviata*. "I specialize in *Traviata*," he recounts. "I did the choreography for three different productions."

In one of them, he recalls, "the lady producer came to me with a clear explanation of why the people would start dancing in the ballroom scene. She had elaborated a perfectly reasonable idea and she wanted choreography to the point. It worked so beautifully and so smoothly, I still remember it with pleasure."

Kirby has choreographed for many opera companies. "I worked in the States, before coming to Canada. For instance, for the Memphis Opera Company I did the choreography for *Carmen* and *Rigoletto*. One that I particularly enjoyed was Menotti's delightful Christmas tale, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*."

Problems for the choreographer in opera arise from producers. "Too often the producer will just treat the dances as a

Gary Beechey

Members of the Canadian Opera Company Ballet in Lotfi Mansouri's production of *Faust*, choreographed by Constantin Patsalas.

sideline, not an integral part of the plot," explains Kirby. " 'Just put some dancing in there' is no clue on how to consider or integrate the dancing with the production. And, of course, the choreography should fit in the production—it should enhance it, make it richer."

And from singers. "Another problem," he continues, "is when you have to use singers for the actual dancing, as in *Carmen*. The choreography should make them look good—as good as real dancers—which often proves very difficult. One is so delighted to find the occasional singer who can also move gracefully!"

Kirby remembers a more positive experience: "A few years ago Norman Campbell produced Puccini's *La Rondine* for CBC, with Teresa Stratas. She was a wonderful lady, and Campbell was no less wonderful to work with. Choreographing for the camera proved, indeed, a stimulating task, and the production was a big success."

Asked about past connections between the National Ballet and the Canadian Opera Company, Kirby recalls, "Celia Franca choreographed several productions—she still does occasionally, as in the 1981 *Fledermaus*. But Lois Smith also worked with them . . . and Angela Leigh."

In recent years it seems that the Canadian Opera Company has gone abroad to find choreographers. For this year's *Faust*, produced by artistic director Lotfi Mansouri, however, the company asked Constantin Patsalas, resident choreographer for the National Ballet, to stage the dances.

"I find choreographing for the opera a very interesting challenge," says Patsalas. "It allows you little freedom as a choreographer, because you are at no liberty to choose the music or the subject. But it stresses your ability to work within certain limits, to interpret the producer's vision of the staged work. It is very rewarding—in a different way than ballet choreography.

"I find the human voice the most beautiful and enticing of all instruments," he explains. "I love choreographing with vocal music, as in *L'Ile inconnue* or *Canciones*. So opera comes quite naturally to me."

Patsalas talks about *Faust*: "I am very pleased with my work with Lotfi Mansouri. Some of the dancers are very good, although I couldn't screen them myself. And the *Walpurgis Night* is a wonderful piece of music—I think I always wanted to choreograph it.

"The staging does pose some limitations, of course, and I had to cut several minutes of music. But I compromised on a 12-minute dance, which is still a good length for a ballet in opera. And I am very satisfied with the results."

Asked about the relationship between ballet and opera, he says, "I do not think that opera and ballet companies could go back to collaboration, like in the old days. Even in Europe the trend is to keep an opera-ballet company, along with a major ballet company, in the large opera houses. Ballet companies are too expensive and they need touring, as well.

"Even if the National happens to be in town when the Canadian Opera Company is performing, the dancers are busy with their rehearsals. And they tend to be overworked as it is. I don't think you can count on them for the opera stage, unless it is possible to support a much larger company."

For the present—and into the immediate future—then, collaboration between ballet and opera would appear to be limited mainly to choreographers. The National Ballet of Canada and the Canadian Opera Company are separate entities and will remain so.

Perhaps when a proper opera house—a melting pot, where daily contact between the ballet and opera companies can be developed—is finally built in Toronto, then the two disciplines will truly mingle. •

Talking with René Highway

by Paula Citron

Long associated with Toronto Dance Theatre, René Highway is considered one of Canada's finest dancers. He is also one of the few Native people to have chosen modern dance as a vocation. After five years of freelance work, the 30-year-old Highway recently rejoined Toronto Dance Theatre. In the following interview with Paula Citron, René Highway talks about how he came to modern dance, the various directions his career has taken and the dichotomy between the culture into which he was born and his chosen profession.

Q. Let's start at the very beginning. What was your early life like?

A. I'm a Cree Indian, born in northern Manitoba, near the Northwest Territories. Most of my early life was spent wandering around the wilds with my parents, because my father was a hunter/trapper in the winter and a fisherman in the summer. My early education was at a boarding school for Native students. If you wanted to go on to high school, you had to go into the city. I chose Winnipeg because my two older brothers were already there.

Q. You call yourself René Highway now, but I remember when you were known as René Dennis Highway. Can we talk about your name change?

A. This goes back to high school, when I was getting involved in dance and trying to hide that from my friends. My real name is René. Dennis is the name I made up for the dance world. When my two worlds merged after I came to Toronto, I used both names. But now I've put it back to René.

Q. How were you first exposed to dance?

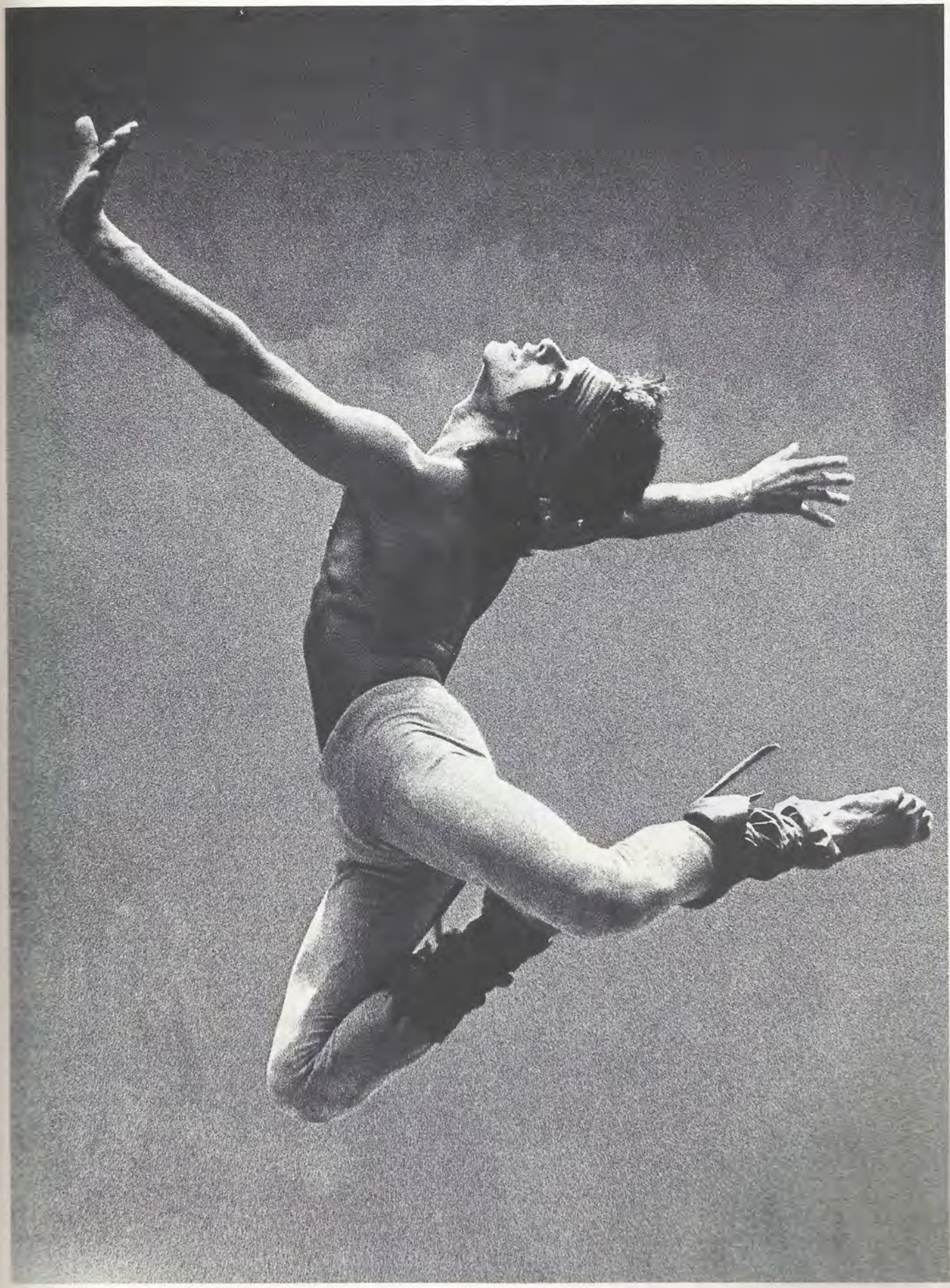
A. I first saw dance when the Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers came with their school tours. My brother also took me to see performances of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Tom is a musician, and the Ministry of Indian Affairs would get symphony tickets and give them to interested students. Occasionally Tom would get tickets to the ballet, so he would take me. I had never seen anything so magical-looking. I loved the well-trained bodies and the incredible sets and costumes. It was theatre that fired my imagination.

Q. When did you decide to train as a dancer?

A. It started slowly. I found out that the Royal Winnipeg Ballet had a school, but I was afraid to approach them. Back in the late '60s—and in Winnipeg, especially—taking ballet classes was an incredible stigma, both as a male and a Native. When I started taking classes at the school once a week, I told my friends I was going to the "Y", and hoped that no one would see me going in. I guess I was 15 when I did my first *plié*.

Q. Why didn't you become a ballet dancer?

A. I have a strange body type, and I knew then that it wouldn't fit into a classical mode. I think my teachers knew then, too. Ballet is so leg-oriented, and the bone structure of the legs is so important for the lines. I feel that my bone structure doesn't go that way. The straighter the bones, the better the alignment. I have to fight to get the bends out, and compensate for the structure. I sometimes feel that I have no business being a dancer, because I don't have a dancer's body.



Frank Richards

That thought really frustrates me, but something else makes me want to go on dancing. I always have to prove to myself that I can dance and perform. It's a phobia of mine—my Achilles heel.

Q. What did you do about your dance training when you finished high school?

A. I decided "academia" wasn't for me, so I ended up in Toronto and looked around for something to do. The only real interest I had was dance, but I had never taken it that seriously. Because all I knew was ballet, I auditioned privately for Betty Oliphant at the National Ballet School. She suggested Toronto Dance Theatre. I guess I didn't start my everyday dance training until I came to Toronto Dance Theatre. I was 18.

Q. Wasn't the training at Toronto Dance Theatre different than what you had known?

A. At first I came to check out the company by watching classes. I had never seen Graham technique before. I remember it being very earthy. It was more grounded. The energy was more intense, and I felt that I could relate to it. So, from that point on, I forgot about ballet. The people at Toronto Dance Theatre were surprised that I showed up there—a Native-American person who wanted to dance.

Q. You refer to yourself as a Native-American. I've never heard that expression before. I guess I'm used to Native-Canadian, or just Native person. Is Native-American the correct term?

A. There are many terms. I guess it depends on how sensitive you are. Native-American embraces the whole continent. I could say Cree, just like people say French or Polish. Within Canada there are many tribes and nations, but we are related. There is also a kinship to the American Indians. That's why I use Native-American.

Q. You're a status Indian. Did the Department of Indian & Northern Affairs pay for your dance training?

A. Yes. It was considered post-secondary schooling, and that helped me at Toronto Dance Theatre. They did look after me that way, and I'm very grateful that they did. I felt a bit spoiled because I didn't have to work and train at the same time.

Q. Were you affected by the focus placed on you because you were a Native-American doing modern dance?

A. At first it went to my head and blew it up a bit, and I felt I was ready to perform long before I was trained enough to survive as a professional dancer.

Q. Do you think that you were noticed more because you were a Native-American than because you were a good dancer?

A. Sometimes I think I was noticed because I was a Native-American; but I believed that I was a competent enough dancer. I would hope that by now I am thought of only as a dancer.

Q. When did you join Toronto Dance Theatre?

A. In 1976, when I was 21. I remember I was overjoyed because I was finally a professional dancer.

Q. So you had only three years of training at Toronto Dance Theatre?

A. It doesn't seem like a very long time to train for a dancer, does it?

Q. But you had had ballet training before.

A. I really hadn't done enough ballet that my body could use. It was almost as if ballet had sensitized my body, had brought it to the point of awakening, to be ready for any kind of technique.

Q. How long were you with Toronto Dance Theatre, and why did you leave?

A. Roughly three years—until 1979. I was invited to teach at Tukak Theatre in Denmark by the director, Reidar Nilsson. He had seen an article I wrote in a Native cultural magazine about my dancing and my experiences with intense animal energy when I was very young. Because of the type of theatre he does, it sparked his interest.

Q. I guess we should explain Tukak. I just came back from Denmark, where I visited Tukak and was impressed by what I saw. It started as a theatre for Greenlanders (the Inuit people of Denmark), and now the company has expanded to include many indigenous peoples, like Native-Americans and Laplanders. As a matter of fact, I met two Canadian Indians who are part of the company. Why do you think your article caught Reidar Nilsson's eye?

A. It was the fact that I was talking about a very primitive kind of force and incorporating it into a contemporary idiom. Because Tukak does a similar kind of work, Reidar looked me up when Tukak toured Canada. He and Toronto Dance Theatre agreed to a cultural exchange. He would spend time with them, and I would come to Denmark. It was supposed to be only a leave of absence for 2½ months, but when I was over there I was awakened further and my energy got fired up.

Q. Would you say that, prior to this, you were content to be an interpreter, and now you wanted to be a creator?

A. No. It intensified what I was feeling, but was unable to put into words. I had done some choreography before going to Denmark—all on Indian themes—but I really didn't know what I was doing. What happened at Tukak was that the environment was very intense. I had never seen creative energy like that. I was overwhelmed by the kind of theatre they were doing and the topics they were dealing with. They were taking old Greenland Inuit legends and telling them in a contemporary way. What was coming out was very powerful and moving, and I could really relate to it.

Q. What did you teach at Tukak?

A. Basically, dance movement to the actors—a more sensi-

Andrew Oxenham

The early years at Toronto Dance Theatre—René Highway and Kathryn Brown in Peter Randazzo's *Continuum*.

tive kind of body awareness than they were getting in their physical training. Before I went there, I had done [some] teaching, but I didn't have enough dance background to draw on. But, there, they weren't dancers—so I could explore what I knew thus far.

Q. You had an extended stay in Europe, as I recall.

A. Yes. My time at Tukak made me want to explore myself more, and the world more. I had never been to Europe before, so I thought I should see as much of it as I could. I travelled through nine countries in seven months. I sometimes wish that I hadn't come back so soon, but I learned a lot.

Q. What?

A. Knowing what independence is, and being on my own. Looking after myself.

Q. What did you do when you came back?

A. I did some work with Toronto Dance Theatre, but, being fresh and full of independence, I wanted to see what I could do on my own, and how I could survive. Also, the company was going through financial difficulties, and there wasn't a full-time position for me, or enough work. It was hard, because I didn't know what to do; I had no specific goals. I dilly-dallied with a lot of things—keeping my training up, a bit of teaching, working with children, choreographing theatre pieces, film and television work, taking part in Native-American musicals out West.

Q. Native-American musicals?

A. They're musicals like any other, but the stories are Native content, with contemporary and traditional music and dance. The first one I was involved with was put together by Maria Campbell, who wrote *Half-Breed*. This was good for me, because I had worked very little with Native people, and now I was checking out my roots. I became aware of other Native peoples' involvement in the arts. When I was with Toronto

Dance Theatre, I had been too involved with the dance world to pay attention to anything else.

Q. Would you say that your time with Tukak triggered an interest in your heritage?

A. Yes. These young people were so knowledgeable about their culture. They were writing and performing in their own language—on a foreign continent, far from their homes. It was inspiring that their culture was so strong. I became aware of being a Native person involved in an art form where not many other Native people were involved. I didn't know how to piece this contradiction together, and I'm still not sure about how to do it.

Q. Was it important for you to do something with your Native background and modern dance?

A. It was almost expected of me. I was a novelty—a Native-American modern dancer. I could have thrown together anything and called it Native-American modern dance, and people would have accepted it. I didn't want to become that kind of novelty. I wanted to do something that gave me meaning, not what people thought I should be doing. In 1982 I collaborated with my brother Tom on a live performance at Harbourfront [in Toronto].

Q. What was the theme of the work?

A. It was called *New Song, New Dance*. The germ of the idea was Indian, but the product wasn't overly Indian. I didn't want to do a Native dance show; it had to be contemporary. I'd like to do it again, and this time do justice to the incredible music my brother wrote.

Q. You used an all-male company. Why?

A. At this point in my choreographic life I find it easier to work with male bodies. I see multiple images of myself; it's like seeing a solo in layers.

Q. Do you think you will ever choreograph for women?

A. I've been invited to the Riel Centennial at Batoche in July, and I want to use a woman in the piece. I'm basing it on a book of Cree poetry called *There is My People Sleeping*.

Q. What other things did you do in your freelance years?

A. I taught in Arizona—in Navaho country—and I made enough money to go to New York for a year. In Arizona they weren't used to modern dance, and they had trouble with the demands I placed on them. But I did manage to pull performances together, and people liked them. They had really never before seen the fusing of two cultural forms into one expression—the Native culture with modern dance technique. It was also Cree and Navaho coming together.

Q. Tell me about New York.

A. I did a lot of training and very little performing. I went back to ballet, to balance my modern dance technique. I felt I was lacking in strength in my lower body and legs. I still do ballet classes, and it has really helped. I wish I had taken ballet all along, but, in my ignorance when I first came to Toronto Dance Theatre, I didn't know that the two trainings could work so well together.

Q. Why did you return to Toronto Dance Theatre in 1984?

A. I came back from New York to do the show with Tom. After that I got involved with other independent choreographers, but I felt that I wasn't doing enough performing. The new artistic director, Kenny Pearl, asked me to work with Toronto Dance Theatre again, and I was surprised and pleased. Kenny had choreographed part of an Ontario Bicentennial show I was in last summer, and I guess he liked the way I worked. The performing feels really good after many years of not doing enough.

Q. Toronto Dance Theatre is really going through a renaissance right now. Why is this happening?

A. Technically, we're being pushed harder than ever before—because of the choreography of Christopher House. He's new blood, which the company really needed. Also, all the dancers are around the same age, and we feel a real camaraderie. Chris is choreographing for the times and the age of the dancers. We want to work harder to master those tricks that he throws at us. They're challenges that take a lot of work to do perfectly with ease.

Q. What about your own choreography?

A. I have a piece I'm reworking from a choreographic workshop last year, but right now I'm satisfying my need for performing by being used as an instrument for dance. The urge to do my own work is not really strong now, but it will come again.

Q. I remember *Ascension Attended by Lightnings* as being a universal piece—not rooted in your Indian heritage. Does this indicate some sort of change?

A. I think it does. The work is a much more internal, everyman sort of thing, so I'm not conforming to people's expectations.

Q. It sounds as if your ethnic background has sometimes been a disadvantage to creativity.

A. It's really been a block. It stopped me from maturing in my choreography, for example. A lot of the offers I got when I was freelancing were to dance in Native ways, to show that I was a Native-American. I couldn't do modern abstract dance, because it wouldn't have made sense to those audiences. Sometimes it felt like a sell-out.

Q. Yet, if you do only modern dance, do you feel that you are doing a disservice to your roots?

A. I'd like to be a dancer and a choreographer, period. Eventually I would like to explore my roots and use the knowledge waiting there, but I have to be careful. I want to blend the two together so that it makes sense to both sides—both the Native-American audiences and sophisticated dance audiences. I am aware of the great power that lies in my roots. That's another reason why I have to be so careful. It would be easy to do cute little rain-dances, but I know I can do better than that. But it takes time. I'm getting closer. •

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Ballet in Halifax

In the beginning . . .

by Pamela Anthony

Sally Brayley Bliss, former director of the Joffrey II Company and an early member of the National Ballet of Canada, recalls her days as a young dancer in Nova Scotia during the 1950s. "It was an extraordinary time in Halifax," she says.

In the years following World War II, ballet, music and opera were finding a place in the province. The artists who came to Halifax, many of them displaced persons from war-torn Europe, quickly found a home and an enthusiastic community to embrace them.

Henry D. Hicks, then Nova Scotia's minister of education, wrote, in the souvenir program for *Ballet Premiere* (held in Halifax in 1951), of the "talented immigrants" who were stimulating so much artistic activity: "The arrival of our new citizens from the older lands where a competent cultural background is an accepted part of normal life has revealed quite suddenly to many Canadians a new easy familiarity with the arts as a part of the ordinary work-a-day world . . . We in Nova Scotia are learning first-hand that there is plenty of talent in Canada, that it needs only encouragement and inspiring direction to bring the latent possibilities to life. So we are grateful to those who have come to us with the artistic 'know-how'."

Among those who came to Halifax were Irene Apiné and her husband, Jury Gotshalks, who helped to found and direct the Halifax Gotshalks Ballet. Hilda Strombergs worked with them, and later directed Halifax Ballet Theatre. Alfred Strombergs, her husband, was the first conductor of the Maritime Symphony Orchestra.

When they arrived in Halifax, the Gotshalks were still in their early twenties. They had trained at the National Opera Ballet School in Riga, Latvia. Apiné had been a soloist with the Latvian National Ballet for two years and had also spent two seasons dancing with the professional Latvian Exile Ballet Company in Germany. The Gotshalks were natural candidates to form a ballet school and company in Halifax.

Sally Brayley Bliss remembers that there were no ballet teachers in Halifax before the Gotshalks came. Bliss had studied ballet in Montreal and Ottawa, but her studies were briefly interrupted when her family moved to Halifax. To remedy the situation, her mother coached her, and an ever-growing group of friends, every day in the family kitchen—from a book. These young dance enthusiasts would form the basis of the Gotshalks' school and company.

The Gotshalks arrived in Halifax in October 1947 and began teaching at the Maritime Conservatory of Music. Their classes, comprised mostly of beginners, quickly grew in size to include more than 50 students. On June 5, 1948, Halifax's first ballet recital was held at the Conservatory.

Once they were established, the Gotshalks brought another husband-and-wife team to Canada. They also became central characters in the local arts community. Hilda Strombergs taught with the Gotshalks, coached the young corps de ballet and became ballet mistress for the company. Alfred Strombergs conducted the newly formed Opera Association and the Nova Scotia Symphonette, which would play for the ballet performances.

For the young dancers, the rigorous classes and training were a dream fulfilled. Both Hilda Strombergs and Irene Apiné remember themselves as demanding and strict. Attempting to find a balance between training and performance preparation for the students required a firm hand. But Sally Brayley Bliss recalls the exhilarating pace of the times, and a love of performance. The Gotshalks were a dazzling pair and provided inspiration for the young dancers. "Imagine being 14 or 15, and working and performing with these people!" explains Bliss. "It was an incredible experience for all of us."

On April 5, 1950, a public meeting was held to discuss the possibility of developing the Halifax Gotshalks Ballet. Supported by the active enthusiasm of the Ballet Guild and students' parents, the company was launched.

The first goal set was to send the company to Montreal for the third Canadian Ballet Festival in November 1950. A public appeal was made for financial assistance.

The company's performance at the Festival was a spectacular success. In a very short time the earnest young dancers from Mrs. Brayley's kitchen and the young immigrants who taught them had won exuberant critical acclaim. Several critics picked the company as one of the most outstanding at the Festival.

Ken Bell

Irene Apiné and Jury Gotshalks in the National Ballet's production of *Swan Lake*, 1955. *(Photograph courtesy of the National Ballet of Canada Archives)*

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Reviews of the performance refer to the unique talents of Irene Apiné and Jury Gotshalks. Sydney Johnson, in *The Montreal Star*, wrote of the impact that this couple made whenever they danced: "The audience enthusiasm overflowed all bounds of restraint when the Gotshalks danced. They performed with an ease and brilliance that left the audience breathless and were constantly interrupted by salvos of applause as one dazzling accomplishment followed another . . . They danced magnificently and really brought the house down with their dazzling display of technique. Besides being outstanding for the brilliant exhibition of the Gotshalks themselves in the leading roles, the week's Ballet Festival program was also interesting for the high standard of performance by their young corps de ballet."

Accompanied by the dizzying praise of the national ballet community, the young company returned to Halifax to perform in *Ballet Premiere*.

Halifax greeted the company's achievement with enthusiasm. "In a word," wrote the honourary president of the Ballet Guild, "we are proud of its Artistic Directors, its corps of performers, its loyal workers, and of ourselves for taking so well to ballet."

With music provided by the now-active symphony, the Halifax Gotshalks Ballet performed throughout the Maritimes and travelled to Toronto.

The Gotshalks wrote in a program note: "We see our mission as dancers fulfilled—we have brought and planted the great tradition of classical ballet in the Maritimes. It has been warmly accepted by enthusiastic classes, by enthusiastically crowded audiences."

In 1952 the Halifax Gotshalks Ballet presented a second major program, *Ballet Cinquante-Deux*, in Halifax, and prepared to make its second appearance at the Canadian Ballet Festival—this time in Toronto.

The company seemed firmly established and able to thrive, but it soon became apparent that there were several factors which threatened its survival. Even as the company collected praise for the high quality of its performances, uncertain funding was becoming a major problem.

Dr. John Merritt, president of the Ballet Guild and a community leader who supported cultural activities, wrote in 1952: "Ballet is being received with enthusiasm across the continent, but at the same time, there is a sombre note due to the expensive production and continuously rising costs. In other countries, the arts have always required financial support in considerable amounts if they were to survive. Up to the present a comparatively small number of people have supported our renaissance. If the public wishes performances of a professional standard . . . then a great deal [of] further financial assistance is imperative."

At the same time, clashes of interest between the Gotshalks and Hilda Strombergs were disrupting the small ballet community in Halifax.

The Gotshalks were facing their most important career choice. At the very time that the Halifax Gotshalks Ballet was appearing at the Canadian Ballet Festival in Toronto, Celia Franca was forming the National Ballet of Canada. The Gotshalks were being hailed by reviewers as "the most highly trained dancers in Canada" and "the foremost dancers in Canada today".

Franca invited them to join the National Ballet.

Irene Apiné and Jury Gotshalks were torn between a desire to see the company they had begun in Halifax grow and flourish and the golden opportunity to join the National Ballet and do what all talented young dancers need to do—dance.

They wrote in a 1952 program note: "Much will depend on how far and how quickly our Company, like all others in Canada, will succeed in the difficult, though not impossible, task of winning the complete capitulation of the whole Canadian public."

The burden of teaching, performing, choreographing, directing and providing inspiration for a growing ballet community placed enormous demands on the Gotshalks. And performance opportunities in the Maritime region were still limited.

In 1952 they left Halifax to join Celia Franca and the National Ballet in Toronto.

Their departure caused a rift in the Halifax dance community. Hilda Strombergs was given responsibility for the school. Although the Gotshalks returned several times to teach and appear in recitals, the Halifax Gotshalks Ballet was no longer a permanent organization.

During the transition, a serious misunderstanding developed between the Gotshalks and Hilda Strombergs. While the Gotshalks were absent, Hilda Strombergs began choreographing for the Nova Scotia Opera Association, using the students who had performed with the Halifax Gotshalks Ballet.

"The Gotshalks were away, and the young girls wanted to dance when there were opportunities," explains Hilda Strombergs. "So we began performing. The Gotshalks were very angry about this."

The Gotshalks, although they had made a full commitment to the National Ballet, felt that they still wanted to be a part of the ballet activity in Halifax. Irene Apiné comments: "When I came back, I felt that there was nothing for me to return to, even if I had wanted to. It was very upsetting."

Although the conflict between the Gotshalks and Hilda Strombergs rocked the small dance community in Halifax, it did not destroy it.

Hilda Strombergs started her own company, Halifax Ballet Theatre, using many of the young dancers she had worked with at the Gotshalks Halifax Ballet.

Under her direction, Halifax Ballet Theatre continued to train young dancers and give performances. "Hilda was bril-

ant as a teacher and as a choreographer," recalls Sally Brayley Bliss. Strombergs extended the company's repertoire from the purely classical to include performances of musical theatre and mini-ballets for Opera Society productions.

Halifax Ballet Theatre was enthusiastically received in Ottawa at the 1953 Ballet Festival, and again in Toronto during the Canadian Ballet Festival in 1954.

In June 1954 the company performed its last major work. The chronic shortage of resources had, once again, crippled the abundance of talent in Halifax. The Strombergs, like the Gotshalks, had to leave. "It was sad," says Hilda Strombergs, "but we had to go. Everything disintegrated at that time. We had to move to Ontario, where there was more work." They took with them a wealth of cultural expertise, knowledge and talent.

Neither the Halifax Gotshalks Ballet nor Halifax Ballet Theatre took the firm root in Halifax that so many had wished for, but the people involved, with their extraordinary talent, dedication and vitality, planted seeds that have produced many blossoms.

Sally Brayley Bliss and other young corps de ballet dancers have gone on to distinguished careers in dance, or become active in the support of dance activities. Ever-growing numbers of young people study ballet in Halifax dance schools, and ballet classes for adults are popular. There is still an enthusiastic and committed ballet audience in Halifax.

The history of ballet in Halifax begins with the Halifax Gotshalks Ballet and Halifax Ballet Theatre. Their legacy represents both the enormous potential and the overwhelming challenges faced by those who wish to see dance thrive in Nova Scotia. •

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A New Adventure for Vanessa Harwood:
Setting *Giselle* in Korea

Vanessa Harwood, Hoon Sook Pak and Gregory Osborne in the Universal Ballet Company's production of *Giselle*.

by **Max Wyman**

The beginning of opening week. In the neo-baroque theatre at the Little Angels Performing Arts Centre on the outskirts of Seoul, Korea, we are in the midst of a fits-and-starts run-through of the Universal Ballet Company's new production of *Giselle*.

A photo-call is in progress. Curious youngsters from the Centre's 3,400-student arts school loll in the stalls, watching the jostling photographers.

"Minnie? Where's Minnie?" cries Vanessa Harwood, principal dancer with the National Ballet of Canada. She is here to mount the show.

There is no answer to her calls. Min Wha Choi, the girl who is supposed to be dancing the peasant pas de deux, has temporarily gone missing. So Harwood, dressed as Bathilde—in that long tan dress and the hat she thinks makes her look like Napoleon—hoists her skirts and improvises a jig across the stage. Her Korean partner takes it in his stride; they end with a flourish.

The photographers groan.

According to No Hi Pak, executive director of the cultural and educational foundations that control the Universal Ballet Company and the school, they are part of a movement to improve the international cultural image of Korea. It is a movement that stems, he says, "from a religious conviction. We're very proud of our country and our heritage."

In 1973 work was begun on the school. Adrienne Dellas, an American, began to teach ballet there in 1976. It is from her program that the Universal Ballet Company has grown. She is now the company's artistic director.

The company is financed by the Unification Church, although not all the dancers belong to the church. Fewer than one per cent of the students at the associated arts school (the chief source of dancer supply) are church members.

No Hi Pak answers questions about the church's involvement in the company quite openly. About $12 million (U.S.) has gone into the complex so far; much more, however, will be needed. The Universal Ballet Company's plans call for extensive—and expensive—international touring: Jacob's Pillow (in the United States) and the Orient this summer, Europe in 1986 and the United States and Canada in 1987. A

At the opening night party—Adrienne Dellas and Vanessa Harwood cut the traditional good-luck cake which Harwood had presented to the company before the performance.

new *Coppélia* is planned for this fall. And Balanchine's *Apollo* is in the works.

The company will also continue to import North American stars. Patrick Bissell of American Ballet Theatre and Lisa Hess of the New York City Ballet have worked with the company. Gregory Osborne, a principal dancer with the National Ballet of Canada, is performing Albrecht in the new production of *Giselle*. He also danced with Hess and Bissell in the company's Tschaikovsky Festival last November. They will all be back for the summer tour, along with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's Evelyn Hart and Jean-Charles Gil, a principal dancer with Roland Petit's Ballet National de Marseilles.

Vanessa Harwood became involved with the Universal Ballet Company through her New York agent, who had also booked Bissell, Hess and Osborne. The origins of Harwood's involvement, however, go back to a *Sleeping Beauty* she did with Rudolf Nureyev in New Mexico a decade ago. Adrienne Dellas saw that performance and never forgot it. When she came to plan her *Giselle*, she gravitated automatically, she says, to Harwood.

Initially Harwood was simply booked to dance the Queen of the Wilis. When Osborne returned from Seoul last November, however, he brought the news that they wanted her to set the piece as well. "My heart," says Harwood, "went . . ."—she flutters her hand against her chest.

With good reason. For one thing, this *Giselle* would mark her first foray into choreography and staging. For another, she had no idea what to expect from the Korean company in terms of technique.

At the same time, however, she saw the engagement as a challenge—and an opportunity. She knew it would be impossible for her to take the National Ballet's version of *Giselle*, created by Peter Wright; instead, she decided to go back to the original production.

In any event, the basic framework of the production was established by Adrienne Dellas, who worked from videotapes of a half dozen versions (including that of the Kirov Ballet). Harwood would polish and change as she saw fit.

In February the two Korean principals who were scheduled to dance Giselle, In Hee Kim and Hoon Sook Pak, spent two weeks working with Harwood in Toronto. She says she was pleasantly surprised by the standard of their dancing.

Two weeks in advance of the opening, Harwood travelled to Korea for the final preparations. She found that, as far as technique was concerned, some of the boys had had no training at all. But most of the girls had spent several years in Dellas' school, and they were neat and clean—and quick learners.

The day before the opening. Nothing goes right today. The dress rehearsal is a disaster. Stan Pressner, the lighting designer imported from New York, had asked the company to obtain 92 new lighting instruments to enable him to do a decent job on *Giselle*. He is coming to terms, bravely and resourcefully, with the fact that, although they were indeed ordered, they have not been cleared through customs and will not be delivered in time for the show.

Opening night. Vanessa Harwood has presented a traditional pre-performance good-luck cake to the company. The preshow prayer has been said. The interested and enthusiastic audience almost fills the 1,420-seat theatre.

Members of the corps de ballet are light on their feet. The mime is crisp and clear. The Inchon Symphony, under the direction of Hwan Sik Im, is slow; but there are no glaring mistakes, and we hear the music more or less as we should.

In Hee Kim (tonight's Giselle) combines sensitive and expressive acting, particularly in the love scenes, with creditable technique. Gregory Osborne is an elegantly noble foil. There is a lot of unforced charm here.

The women of the corps make up in freshness what little they lack in finesse. The men are less impressive. Still, the entire company reaches out and touches you with its commitment, its determination to succeed in communicating in this essentially alien art form. By the time we reach the mad scene, we have been caught up in the proceedings. There is a lot of fine acting here.

The second act begins, and Harwood, as Queen of the Wilis, makes the audience gasp with her immaculate *bourrée* glide down the long diagonal and her confident, all-the-time-in-the-world *attitudes*.

The second performance. Not necessarily better, but night-and-day different. The performance itself, without that first-night tension, lacks some of last night's magic.

The real difference is in the Giselles. In Hee's was robust, earthy. Hoon Sook gives us a Giselle fragile as a butterfly, vulnerable as a wounded bird. Even in the first act, a mist of impending tragedy hangs about her. This is the dancing she was made for. She and the buoyant, stylish Osborne carry the act, carry the show; they make *Giselle* touch us again.

The dancers have taken Harwood's coaching handsomely; she has produced a corps of Wilis that would not be out of place in many North American regional companies.

"I think we're right on the brink," says Adrienne Dellas. "Now it's time for the kids to refine what they have." •

The Choreographic Act:
Discovery, Art or Craft?

by **Iro Tembeck**

The word choreography, in its original sense, actually referred to the "writing" of dance—what is today known as dance notation. Now, taken in a much broader sense, it refers to the making and creating of dances. Over the past several years I have witnessed the label "choreographer" being applied to dance artists who range from the researcher-discoverer to the dancemaker, the reconstructor and even the improviser, who has been called the "spontaneous choreographer".

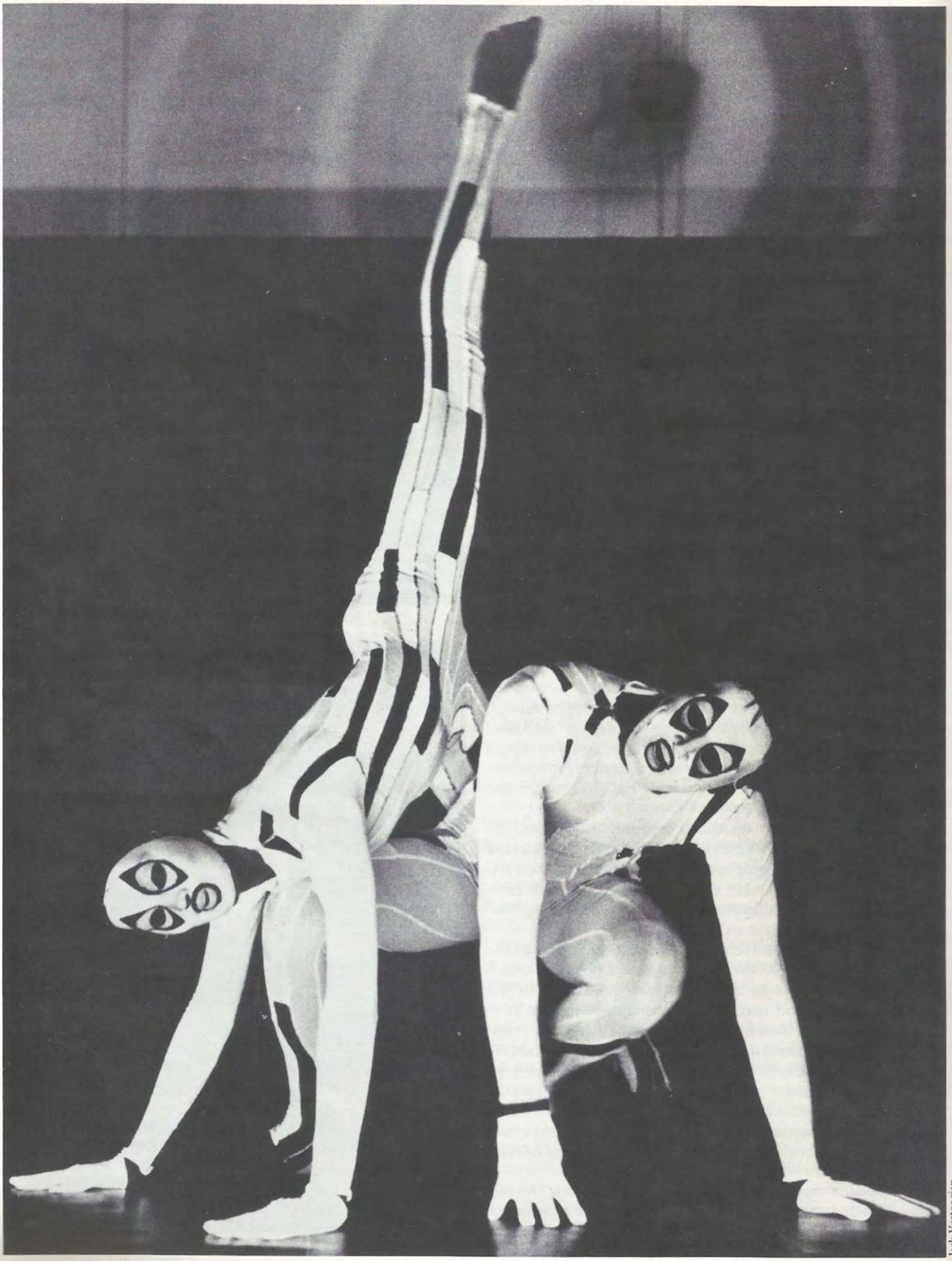
I would like to reflect on the choreographic act, and attempt to identify and differentiate the many approaches to the process taken by choreographers. By first analyzing the various *raisons d'être* of art, I can then attempt to establish categories of choreographic approach based on choreographers' philosophical beliefs about art.

The introduction of novelty and innovation is one of the important roles of art. When pushed to its extreme, the search for novelty gives rise to invention and discovery. In the search for novelty and inventiveness, originality is the governing criterion. The best known methods of achieving originality stem from craftsmanship, vision or sheer provocation.

The craftsman refurbishes the age-old rules to breed new insights. The visionary artist acts like a medium, through whom essential visions are transmitted. He becomes an alchemist, relying on the magical traits of art. The iconoclast artist, through the medium of provocation, tears down the universally accepted rules with a conscious irreverence.

The opposite view is to consider art as illustrating "historicity," which wishes to maintain tradition and time-tested aesthetic norms often denoted as "classical". In this view we can include reconstruction and adaptation of works and the celebration of the art form—in which the artist, as celebrant, wishes to share a common experience with his public.

Martha Graham's *Seraphic Dialogue*. The choreographer as creator/inventor "creates an impressive body of work with a new philosophy, a new premise and a new vocabulary."



Jack Vartoogian

Alwin Nikolais' *Gallery*. For the choreographer as alchemist, or image-maker, "the choice of movement does not necessarily depend on the discovery of a new vocabulary, but rather on seeing movement in a fanciful and new context."

For several years now, contemporary artistic trends have pointed toward a further category: that of art as "concept". Here, the artist-thinker communicates a new idea and causes the audience to reflect on it—not on the artistic form employed.

I have attempted to classify different choreographic methods in two ways. First, based on the above-mentioned views of art. Second, by exploring the many ways dances are created, particularly in relation to the choice of movement vocabulary.

The choreographer as creator/inventor. For this artist, choreography implies a discovery and invention leading to a new molding of the art form. Such an artist creates an impressive body of work with a new philosophy, a new premise and a new vocabulary—which can be applied not only in the shaping of a particular work, but in a coherent manner throughout his whole creative process.

Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey are such choreographers. They have acted as trail-blazers, originating new schools of thought and innovating much more than trends. They provided philosophical guidelines pertaining to movement choice and dynamics. They are "authors" of original works.

The choreographer as dancesmith. This artist uses his craftsmanship and knowledge to create a well-wrought dance. More a renovator of tradition than an originator, he applies stylistic changes which personalize his work. A new angle on tradition.

The choreographer as alchemist. The visionary artist uses fantasy, imagination and intuition as a means of conjuring up a vision that has no bearing on reality. He enters a dream world, and his art is unreal—an artifice, fully imaginary.

The work of Alwin Nikolais, in which the choice of movement does not necessarily depend on the discovery of a new vocabulary, but rather on seeing movement in a fanciful and new context, is a good example. The steps, *per se*, are important only insofar as they relate to the context which alters their shape and connotation.

This artist is an image-maker or "sceno-choreographer"—from the French, *scénographie* (set design). His primary concern is to transmit images, unlike the dancesmith or inventor who forges new steps and discovers a new vocabulary.

The choreographer as iconoclast. Acting as an *agent provocateur*, this artist jolts his public out of its passivity. His goals are to discontinue tradition and break the time-tested images of aestheticism. Once he has torn apart the tradition and artistic principles of the old vision, he may or may not decide to provide an alternative.

Much of the work of New York's Judson Church collective in the 1960s was iconoclastic in nature.

The choreographer as reconstructor. For an ephemeral art like dance, reconstruction is one of the chief means of preserving tradition and keeping it alive. Anton Dolin's version of *Giselle*, for example, is the work of a restorer working much in the fashion of a curator. The preservation of antiquity and tradition is the *raison d'être* behind this approach, in which art is viewed in terms of "historicity".

The choreographer as adapter. Closely related to the reconstruction process, adaptation allows the artist considerably more leeway in interpreting tradition and giving it a personal touch.

Maurice Béjart's *Rite of Spring* follows Stravinsky's score and maintains the raw, primitive feeling and the ritual element found in the original work, but the choreographer has done away with the Russian and ethnic touch.

West Side Story is more than a rejuvenation of the legend of Romeo and Juliet. Jerome Robbins gave the work a coherent stylistic look which makes the piece his very own.

The demarcation line between modifier and innovator becomes very hard to draw at this point. In the works mentioned above, I would tend to classify Béjart and Robbins as catalysts, who alter what is well-known and render it in a new, more contemporary fashion.

The choreographer as movement-arranger. This artist, whom I call the dancemaker, upholds the concept of art as a celebration of tradition. He wishes to communicate his art with a sure sense of immediacy.

The dancemaker selects movements from the bank of well-known steps to serve his purpose—be it to display virtuosity, entertain his public or even move the onlookers. There is no attempt to create a new vision; the movement selection is pragmatic and functional.

I would liken the dancemaker to an orchestrator, or a stage director who juggles the different elements of a production well, without paying undue heed to the invention of steps.

The choreographer as thinker. In conceptual art, the message or idea conveyed is stressed over the means of communication. Consequently, conceptual art is often coupled with minimalism, and the dance piece becomes simplified, short and so to the point that sometimes few—or even no—steps are used.

The conceptual artist works as both a reformulator and a reformer, exploding old myths in a matter-of-fact way and opening new avenues. Without relying on the shock element of the *agent provocateur.*

Choreography does not have as its primary or sole objective that of absolute invention or innovation; rather it stems from an artist's urge to impart his sense of renewal—whether with himself, with society or with tradition.

Some choreographers will formulate and discover; they are the inventors and trail-blazers. Others will form and reform and uncover; they are the dancesmiths and reconstructors. Yet others will cover and deform, in an iconoclastic gesture which eventually will herald new trends. Still others are visionaries, who will transform through image-making.

Whether the choreographic process involves evolution, revolution or involution, it is always ultimately governed by a personal sense of renewal and by the artist's view of dance in the context of the society and culture of which he is a part. •

In Review: Books

The Dance in Mind
Profiles and Reviews 1976-83
by Deborah Jowitt
David R. Godine, Publisher, Inc., 1985

Reviewed by Mary Reid

Someone recently said to me that Deborah Jowitt has the best dance beat in the world, writing weekly for New York's *Village Voice*. She certainly seems to have encouraging editors, and she writes about all kinds of dancing. Her new book, *The Dance in Mind*, presents the cream of the crop of her reviews and profiles from 1976 to 1983.

Jowitt states in the preface that she wants to offer her perspective for people to compare with their own. Rather than referring to an absolute scale of values, she strives to consider a dance work on its own terms. This openness of mind keeps her work changeable and fresh.

Among ballet articles included in the book are pieces on George Balanchine, Maurice Béjart, the Royal Ballet and a Bournonville festival in Copenhagen.

In "Traditions of Other Countries", a section on ethnic dance, she writes about Australian aboriginal dancers and companies from Japan, China, Senegal and Spain.

Though it covers a broad range of dance—ballet, ethnic and modern—Jowitt's writing best illuminates the newer and newest of modern dance. Here she redefines her vocabulary and poetics each time she focuses on a new choreographer, be it "clumsy, visionary" Kei Takei or "juicily precise, powerful" Bill T. Jones.

Jowitt also discusses how a work is made, and how the performer is while performing it. Douglas Dunn's dancing, she writes, "seems so much a process of testing forces and monitoring space."

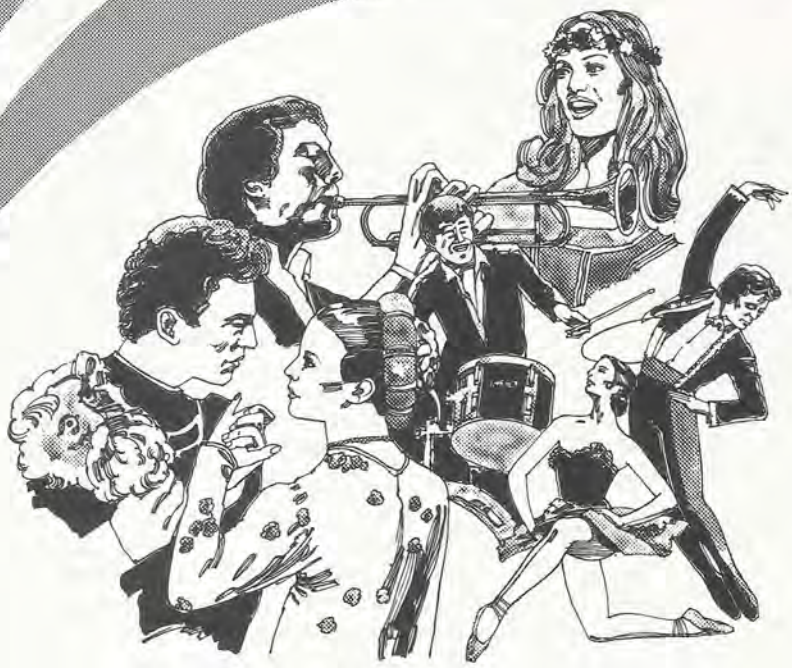
The way the book is organized reveals an effort to understand the history of modern dance. Articles are set up historically, in sections titled "Some Masters", "Iconoclasts of the Sixties and Seventies" and "The New Generation". Jowitt is most confident and positive in these pieces, where her account of the dancing is most detailed.

For a period, Deborah Jowitt and a circle of other dance critics became obsessed with description, the detached documenting of what happened on the stage. They took Susan Sontag's famous essay "Against Interpretation" at face value and refused to show a particular point of view. What resulted from that exercise was a distillation of the action.

Sometimes she still resorts to simple, blow-by-blow accounts: the story-line of Twyla Tharp's *Catherine Wheel*; a description of a sequence of moves by Trisha Brown—"When Brown dances, a hundred ideas assail her body in the space of a few seconds. Flingshudderscoopupdragtwistreelkickgallop."

Now, however, Jowitt also lets the reader know how the dancing makes her feel, in gem-like turns of phrase that sum up the work and the artists. Her real gifts come out when she pinpoints the essence of a choreographer. Trisha Brown's "performing manner, like her name, is plain and unassuming." Erick Hawkins' dancers "seem to be sensing the caress of the air . . . the poetic inner impulse of motion." In great Spanish dancers, she observes, "it's the image of passion controlled that's thrilling."

The Dance in Mind distills eight years of dance viewing into a few hours reading. In its best moments, Jowitt's strong commitment to capturing in words the elusive essence of dance, and the people who make it, keep this informative book readable and enjoyable. •



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

The Dance in Canada Association has selected choreographer-director **Brian Macdonald** to receive the 1985 **Canada Dance Award**. Presentation of the award will be made at this year's Dance in Canada conference in Halifax, at a gala performance to be held at the Dalhousie Arts Centre, June 29.

Members of **Nova Dance Theatre**, the **National Ballet of Canada**, **Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal**, the **Ukrainian Shumka Dancers**, the **National Tap Dance Company of Canada** and **Toronto Dance Theatre** are scheduled to perform at the gala.

The Dance in Canada Association Service Awards will also be presented at the conference. The 1985 recipients, each of whom has given many hours of service to the Association, are **Lawrence Adams**, **Susan Cohen**, **Iris Garland** and **Dianne Miller**.

Vancouver's **EDAM** was invited to perform at the *Seattle International Children's Festival*, April 23-28, and at the *International Children's Festival* in Vancouver, May 6-12. EDAM has also been selected to participate in the Vancouver Children's Festival television series to be broadcast on CBC.

New ballet, jazz and modern works by Grant Strate, Earl Kraul, Dianne Miller, Shelley Cromie and Maureen McKellar are scheduled for performance by **The Dance Gallery** at Vancouver's Centennial Theatre in May.

Special Delivery's The Festival Characters have been invited to appear at the *International Children's Festival* in Vancouver, May 9-12.

Trans-forms, an evening of new dance works by **Gisa Cole**, director of Main Dance Place, and **Iris Garland**, founder and faculty member of the dance program at Simon Fraser University, is scheduled for presentation at Vancouver's Firehall Theatre, May 29-June 1.

Students of Vancouver's **Goh Ballet Academy** will appear in performance at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, June 23. Featured on the program will be the last two acts of *Lin Dai-Yu*, a work choreographed by Li ChengXiang, artistic director of the Central Ballet of China.

Alex Hoo

Zhang Dandan and Zhu Yaoping, principal dancers with the Central Ballet of China, in rehearsal at the Goh Ballet Academy in Vancouver. They will appear in performance with students from the Academy at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in June.

Lin Dai-Yu is based on an 18th-century Chinese novel, *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. Leading roles in the ballet will be performed by guest artists Zhang Dandan and Zhu Yaoping, two of the Central Ballet's principal dancers.

Choo Chiat Goh, artistic director of the Academy, and his wife, Lin Yee, are both former principal dancers with the Chinese company.

Also on the program will be two pieces created by Willy Tsao, artistic director of the Hong Kong City Contemporary Dance Company.

New works from the third **National Choreographic Seminar** will be presented at the Simon Fraser University Theatre, June 27-28. Choreographic directors for the seminar will be Robert Cohan, artistic director of London's Contemporary Dance Theatre, and Murray Louis, artistic director of New York's Murray Louis Dance Company. Santa Aloi and Grant Strate of Simon Fraser University's Centre for the Arts will be instructors in modern dance and ballet.

Clive Padfield, president of the Dance in Canada Association, has been appointed director of the Performing Arts Branch of **Alberta Culture**. Mary J. LeMessurier, Alberta's minister of culture, commented on the appointment: "Alberta Culture is very fortunate to have acquired the services of such a capable and accomplished individual. Dr. Padfield's academic qualifications and extensive administrative experience with the performing arts, at the mu-

nicipal, provincial and national levels, make him an ideal choice for the directorship."

In June, Edmonton's **Ukrainian Shumka Dancers** will travel to the United States to appear at the *Garden State Arts Festival* in New Jersey.

Calgary's **Sun-Ergos** has received a Canada Works grant to develop a portable theatre which will enable the company to transform areas in community centres, hospitals, churches and gymnasiums into viable performance spaces. The grant will also allow Sun-Ergos to do community development, research and programming.

The Calgary Centre for the Performing Arts, Canada's newest performing arts complex, opens September 14, 1985. The Centre will have three state-of-the-art performing arts spaces—including the 450-seat Martha Cohen Theatre, which officials describe as "ideal for intimate drama, dance and music recitals".

Marilyn Lewis-Pelt, Winnipeg-born former member of Netherlands Dance Theatre and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, has been appointed manager of the **School of Contemporary Dancers** in Winnipeg. Commenting on her new job, she said, "Being a part of the development and expansion of a major dance school in Winnipeg is a challenge for me, as I see dance as an essential part of cultural education."

The position has been created to accommodate the expansion of the School, which will be located in the newly constructed Rachel Browne Studio in the lower level of the Augustine Church.

When the **Royal Winnipeg Ballet** begins its annual *du Maurier Ballet in the Park* in August, the company will be performing, for the first time, on a new, permanent stage facility at Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park.

The idea for this facility resulted from a meeting between Royal Winnipeg Ballet management and Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation Minister Eugene Kostyra.

William Riske, general manager of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, explains: "Kostyra suggested that we review the costs involved in *Ballet in the Park* in order to see the project continue into the future. Since a substantial portion of the costs involved was in the construction of the temporary stage every year, it became apparent that a permanent facility would alleviate some of the financial burden. Not only will it provide a valuable performing site for the ballet, but it will allow other performing groups, as well as individuals, the opportunity to share their talent with Winnipeg audiences."

Clive Padfield, president of the Dance in Canada Association, is the new director of the Performing Arts Branch of Alberta Culture.

Works by David Allan, John Alleyne, Luc Amyot, Donald Dawson, Ingrid Filewood, Bengt Jorgen, Kim Nielson, Yuri Ng, Eva Robertson, Amalia Schelhorn and guest choreographer Matthew Nash were performed at the choreographic workshop presented by the **National Ballet of Canada** at Toronto's Bathurst Street Theatre in March.

Dancer-choreographer **Diana Calenti** toured Egypt this spring, sponsored by Canada's department of external affairs. In addition to performing her works in recital, Calenti also taught workshops in ballet and her own style of dance, a blend of classical ballet and Egyptian dance, at the American University in Cairo.

Gina Lori Riley Dance Enterprises marked its sixth season with performances of a new work, *Mabel, Two Nights at the Bowling Alley and We Can Do That*, at the University of Windsor in April.

Dancemakers travelled to Europe this spring for appearances in Wales, Scotland and France. In Paris the company participated in *Aujourd-hui Ontario danse* at the Centre Pompidou. Dancemakers presented workshops and classes, as well as performances, in most cities on the tour.

Mavis Staines has been appointed associate artistic director of the **National Ballet School**. Artistic Director and Ballet Principal Betty Oliphant, who had named Staines as her assistant a year ago, stated: "I am delighted with the way Mavis has assumed many artistic responsibilities within the School, particularly for our presentations and performances."

Students from the **Quinte Dance Centre**, with guest artists Gizella Witkowsky and Serge Lavoie of the National Ballet of Canada, performed in Belleville and Kingston this spring. The program included *On Occasion* by the National Ballet's David Allan; the third act of *Napoli*; excerpts from *Swan Lake*; *On Kites*, a new work by Jim Burns; and *Il Se Reveille*, a pas de deux choreographed by the Centre's artistic director, Brian Scott.

Herbert Whittaker, former dance and theatre critic for *The Globe and Mail*, received the 1985 **Dance Ontario Award** at a gala celebration dinner in Toronto, April 28.

Original choreography by Janet Aronoff, Karen duPlessis, René Highway, Merle Holloman, Benoît Lachambre, David Roussève and Luc Tremblay is scheduled for performance by members and apprentices of **Toronto Dance Theatre** in a choreographic workshop in Toronto at the beginning of May.

In Toronto, **Harbourfront** has announced plans for Premiere Dance Theatre's 1985-86 season. Scheduled to appear are the **Paul Taylor Dance Company**, **Second Stride**, the **Danny Grossman Dance Company**, **Momix**, **Desrosiers Dance Theatre**, **Le Groupe de la Place Royale**, the **Lewitzky Dance Company**, **Repertory Dance Company of Canada**, **Anna Wyman Dance Theatre**, the **Hubbard Street Dance Company**, **Carolyn Carlson**, **Terrill Maguire Dances**, **Northern Lights Dance Theatre** and **T.I.D.E.**

Paul Draper, internationally renowned tap dancer, will lead a two-week special training program with the **National Tap Dance Company of Canada** in Toronto, May 6-17.

Ottawa's **National Arts Centre** has announced its 1985-86 dance program. Scheduled to appear are the **Stuttgart Ballet**, the **National Ballet of Canada**, **Les Grands Ballets Canadiens**, the **Royal Winnipeg Ballet**, **Pilobolus Dance Theatre**, the **Murray Louis Dance Company**, **Ballet-Théâtre Français de Nancy**, the **Martha Graham Dance Company**, **Compagnie Maguy Marin** and the **Lewitzky Dance Company**.

In September, the *Ottawa International Dance Festival*, presented in co-operation with Montreal's *International Festival of New Dance*, will feature performances by Pina Bausch's **Tanztheater Wuppertal**, the **Merce Cunningham Dance Company**, French choreographer **François Verret**, **Second Stride**, Belgian dancer-choreographer **Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker** and **Muteki Sha**.

Maxine Heppner and Dancers are scheduled to appear at Ottawa's Saw Gallery, May 4; St. Michael's College Theatre in Toronto, May 14-18; and the University of Western Ontario in London, June 15-16. Featured on the program will be Heppner's new work, *Conversations*.

The National Tap Dance Company of Canada has been invited to participate in the *Toronto International Children's Festival*, May 16-20. The company will perform artistic director

Scrivano

Herbert Whittaker receives the 1985 Dance Ontario Award from Lois Smith, artistic director of the School of Dance at George Brown College in Toronto.

William Orlowski's production of *The Sandwich* at Premiere Dance Theatre.

The Dance Company of St. Catharines will make two appearances at St. Catharine's Brock Centre for the Arts in May. At the Thistle Theatre, May 5—in performance with the Niagara Youth Orchestra, featuring the world premiere of *Magic Circle*, choreographed by the company's artistic director, Mascha Stom. And at the Playhouse, May 18.

The National Ballet School presents *An Evening of Ballet* at Toronto's MacMillan Theatre, May 30-June 1. The program will include José Limón's *There is a Time*; *Chopiniana*; and *Memories Recalled—Not Mine!*, choreographed by Glenn Gilmour, a former principal dancer with the National Ballet of Canada and, since 1972, a member of the staff at the National Ballet School.

During May and June, Indian dancer **Menaka Thakkar** will appear in Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and Winnipeg. She will also travel to the United States, giving performances in Seattle, Chicago and Pittsburgh.

Independent choreographer **Louise Azzarello** presents *Moving On*, a program of her works examining some of the central themes in the lives of Canadian women, at Toronto's Winchester Street Theatre, June 6-8. Included in *Moving On*, which is designed by Janet Cornfield, with music by Erna Van Daele, are two new works, as well as *Wants, Dust and Smoke* and *Double Dotted Bar*.

This summer, following the National Ballet's European tour, **David Allan** will lead a group of dancers from the company—***Stelle e Solisti del Balletto Canadese***—on a nine-city tour of Italy.

Veronica Tennant, Karyn Tessmer, Gizella Witkowsky, Gretchen Newburger, Gregory Osborne, Serge Lavoie, Jeremy Ransom and Rex Harrington will perform a repertoire featuring several of Allan's own works, including *On Occasion, Lento, Pastel* and *Villanella*.

The tour has been organized by dance writer Giuliana Gattoni and Toronto advertising executive Joel Olanow.

Le Groupe de la Place Royale and **Theatre Ballet of Canada** will present a summer festival of dance in Ottawa, July 1-7. There will be free daily performances on the National Arts Centre Terrace by dance companies, schools and multicultural groups from Ottawa and across Canada. The *Canada Day Celebration* is scheduled to include performances by Theatre Ballet of Canada and Le Groupe de la Place Royale.

Folk Ballet Theatre will appear at Harbourfront's Studio Theatre in Toronto, July 18-20. The program will include the Toronto premiere of *The Gypsies*, a new work from Romania.

The National Ballet of Canada appears at Artpark in Lewiston, New York, from August 27 to September 1. Repertoire will include *Onegin, Canciones, Components* and *Raymonda Act III*.

Photo-Dance, an exhibit of dance photographs by **Marilyn Westlake** and abstract photo drawings by **Tom Reaume**, will be on display at the Brampton Public Library and Art Gallery, August 29-September 29.

The National Ballet of Canada and the **Canadian Opera Company** need a new performing arts centre in Toronto, according to the draft report of a study commissioned by the **Opera Ballet Hall Corporation**.

The Corporation was formed in 1982 to oversee the financing, construction and operation of a new home for the two companies. Its board consists of 10 directors—five each from the Ballet and the Opera.

The 12-month study, conducted by Theatre Projects Consultants, concludes that the O'Keefe Centre is totally inadequate for the companies—its over-large auditorium, large number of marginal seats, poor acoustics and inadequate stage and backstage areas are all cited as factors deterring their growth—and

not be economically upgraded.

Construction of a 2,000-seat opera ballet hall that will meet the growing needs of the National Ballet and the Canadian Opera Company for more performances and a higher quality performance environment is recommended. The target date for completion of construction is 1990, at a projected cost of $99 million.

Choreographer **Michael Montanaro** received the ninth **Canada Council Jacqueline Lemieux Prize** from Celia Franca, a member of the Council, in a presentation at the Ottawa studios of Le Groupe de la Place Royale at the end of March. A former dancer, choreographer and assistant artistic director of Le Groupe, Montanaro now lives in Montreal and works as an independent choreographer.

The prize, awarded twice annually, honours the memory of Jacqueline Lemieux, founder of the Montreal dance company Entre-Six and Quebec Eté Danse, and a member of the Council's Advisory Arts Panel.

Susan Macpherson is touring her one-woman show in Europe this spring. She will perform in Paris, Munich, Berlin, Nottingham and London. Guest artist Danny Grossman will appear with her during the Paris, Berlin and London engagements. Repertoire for the tour includes work by Grossman, James Kudelka, Paul-André Fortier and Robert Cohan.

Danséchange Montréal/Paris will take place in June. French choreographers and dancers will appear at Montreal's **Tangente Danse Actuelle**, June 5-8 and 12-15, while Le Théâtre de la Bastille in Paris will showcase Quebec artists, June 19-29. New works created by nine choreographers and 30 dancers, including **Ginette Laurin** and **Michael Montanaro** of Quebec and **Pierre Droulers** and **Dominic Boivin** from France, will be presented during this festival of new dance.

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens has announced plans for its 1985-86 season in Montreal. During fall performances, October 31-November 2, the company will present Fernand Nault's production of *Carmina Burana*; *Four Temperaments* by George Balanchine; and a new work, *White Dragon*, by Elisa Monte. Winter performances, January 30-February 1, will feature *Les Sylphides*; *Epreuve de force*, a new work by Edward Hillyer; and Brian Macdonald's *Tam Ti Delam*. In the spring, March 6-8, the company will perform *Catulli Carmina* by John Butler; Balanchine's *Serenade*; and *In Paradisum* by James Kudelka. The March 20-22 performances will include two works by Balanchine, *Theme and Variations* and *Agon*—the ninth Balanchine ballet to enter the company's repertoire—and two by Kudelka, *Passage* (choreographed in 1983 for American Ballet Theatre II) and *unfinished business* (created for Dancemakers in 1984). •

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Errata: *Cats in Toronto* (Issue Number 43)—Two of the photographs supplied by the show's producers were incorrectly identified: the Rum Tum Tugger (cover) is Greg Bond and Tumblebrutus (page 6) is Stelio Calagias.


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Effective January 15, 1985.

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