

DANCE • DANSE

in **C A N A D A**



*Celia Franca
and the National Ballet
Celebrate 35 Years*

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DANCE • DANSE

in au C A N A D A

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COVER: Celia Franca. Photograph by V. Tony Hauser.

Sophistication by Celia Franca. 14kt gold jewellery by Birks. Miss Franca's dress by Bernard Perris, available at Creeds, 45 Bloor Street West, Toronto.

The National Ballet at 35

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

by Michael Crabb

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS and thirty-five dollars. That's how long ago it was when the National Ballet of Canada gave its debut performance, and it is also how much the motley company of 28 mostly tyro dancers were paid each week. Joining them onstage that rainy night of November 12, 1951 was the English dancer, ballet mistress, administrator and budding choreographer Celia Franca.

The stage of Toronto's Eaton Auditorium was hardly the most auspicious venue for the launching of a *soi-disant* "national" ballet troupe, but it was *somewhere*; certainly a deal more accommodating than the rat-infested St. Lawrence Hall where Franca had rehearsed the dancers long and hard.

It would be nice to say that the moment was the fulfillment of a long-held dream, but it was not. It had actually happened very quickly, before many of the venture's less visionary supporters quite realized what was happening.

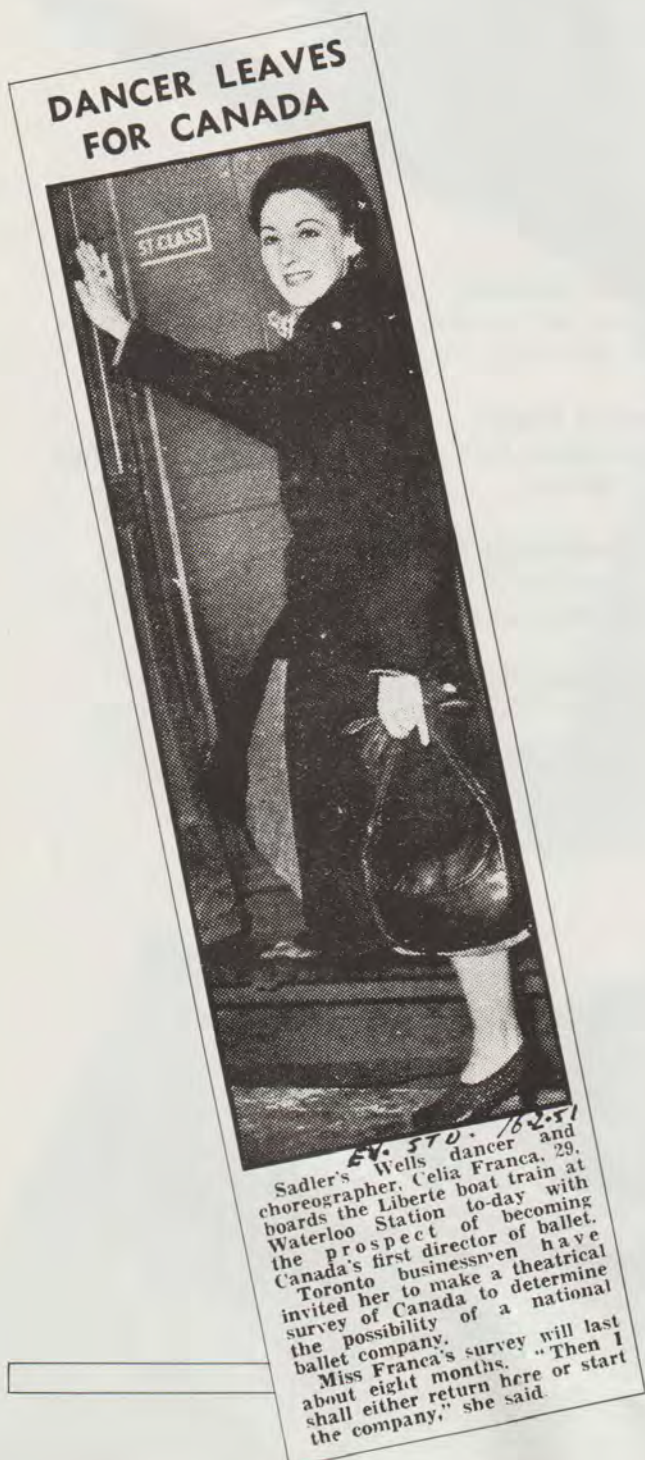
THE BASIC FACTS are well-enough recorded. As far as ballet culture was concerned, Toronto in particular and Canada generally constituted one unwelcoming wasteland. To be sure, visiting dancers from abroad—including even the legendary Anna Pavlova and Vaslav Nijinsky—had appeared on these shores, and there were isolated pockets of determined local activity in the major cities, but even the best of these, the Winnipeg Ballet, was struggling to survive in an alien environment.

For all the success of the early Canadian Ballet Festivals, the first of which was held in Winnipeg in 1948, the art form attracted more suspicion than support from the public at large. Only fanatics would dare to hope for better.

Yet, fanatics there were. One of them, the Russian *émigré* ballet master Boris Volkoff, had hung up his sign on Yonge Street in Toronto as early as 1929. And, in between choreographing ice-shows and little numbers to go between the movies at the city's Uptown Theatre, he had, by 1936, managed to develop a quite presentable little troupe, which was shipped off to that year's Olympic dance festival in Berlin.

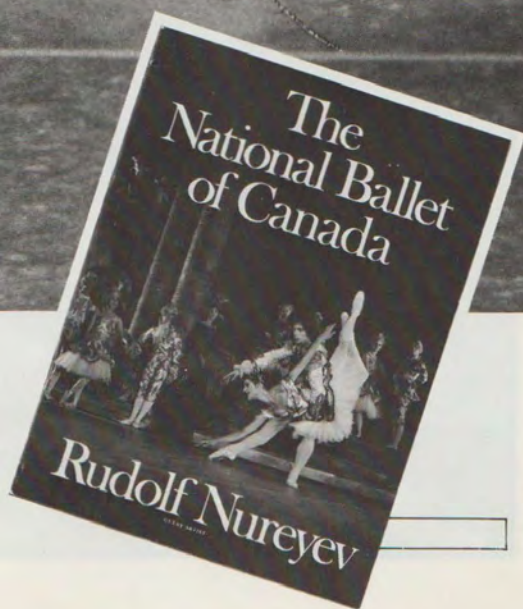
Volkoff's efforts to establish a truly professional and Canadian company in Toronto persisted, but the fiery little Russian, with his constant cigarette and elegant cane, did not win support where, for better or worse, it really counted.

By 1949, when the Sadler's Wells (now Royal) Ballet paid its first visit to Toronto, there were a few well-connected local balletomanes who thought it might be rather fun to have





The National Ballet of Canada first presented Rudolf Nureyev's production of *The Sleeping Beauty* in 1972. With a price-tag of close to \$400,000—Michael Crabb describes the work as one of Celia Franca's "most outrageous spending sprees"—it has earned its keep and provided a "marvellous vehicle in which to display the company's remarkable crop of ballerinas". (Above) Karen Kain and Rudolf Nureyev. (Right) Veronica Tennant and Nureyev.





John Cranko's Romeo and Juliet entered the repertoire in 1964. (Left) Cranko and Celia Franca preparing for the first rehearsals. (Above) Veronica Tennant (Juliet), Grant Strate (Friar Laurence) and Earl Kraul (Romeo) in the wedding scene from Norman Campbell's film of the ballet for CBC television.

a national ballet company to fuss over right in their hometown. The Sadler's Wells troupe provided a spur and inspiration. Here was the model. But who should make it happen in Canada? Call Celia Franca was the answer given by the Wells' formidable founder and director, Ninette de Valois.

Franca was called. She came and she stayed. Initially, however, her visit was ostensibly no more than a reconnaissance trip. Even when she advised her sponsors that something could be done, no clear-cut plan of attack was ready.

The enthusiasm of the newly formed National Ballet Guild was such that when Franca proposed holding a summer school in 1951, she was held personally responsible for any financial losses. But, like the small concert performances that Franca had already presented in Toronto and Montreal, the summer school was a success.

Franca's enthusiasm was infectious. Despite apprehension among some of the Guild members, the theatre was booked, and the National Ballet became an almost unexpected reality.

CIRCUMSTANCES are very different today if you go to see the company perform in Toronto. A lot of the faces onstage—if they all appeared at once, there would be 67 of them—are very young. Far too young to be able to imagine what torment and frustration their predecessors had to endure.

To begin with, the dancers can actually live off their weekly wages: \$362.27 for a beginning corps member to a base of \$663.12 for a newly appointed principal artist. They still spend their offstage working hours at the historic St. Lawrence Hall, but the pigeons and rats have long since been driven out, and the plumbing even works. They have a union to make sure that conditions are bearable and to see that ruthless ballet masters do not drive them too hard.

More important, onstage they have lots of room to move when giving one of their many hometown seasons. The 27-year-old O'Keefe Centre may be, as Shirley MacLaine once put it, "the best-decorated aircraft hangar in North America", but it does have more than 3,000 seats to accommodate the National Ballet's steadily growing audience and the facilities to present lavish productions of the full-length classics.

These works have always been part of the company's mandate. The National Ballet of Canada was planned as a custodian of the classical tradition. Despite the chronically paltry resources available in the early years, Celia Franca began to produce versions of *Swan Lake* and *Giselle*, *Coppélia* and *The Nutcracker*—not just because they were what a conservatively minded public appeared to relish, but because they were good for the dancers. They provided a technical and dramatic challenge, and a measure whereby the company's emerging proficiency could be judged.

YET CELIA FRANCA, contrary to the portrait as a dyed-in-the-wool traditionalist that has often been painted by detractors, wanted much more. "I wanted *new* everything," she says, "but I had to wait till we could afford it."

But she did begin, right from the start, to take risks on such Canadian choreographers as David Adams and Grant Strate, and she happily persuaded her friend and colleague Antony Tudor, with whom she had worked in England, to stage some of his finest works for her troupe. These fitted admirably onto the stage of Toronto's Royal Alexandra Theatre, where the National Ballet most often appeared in its home city until the momentous move to the O'Keefe Centre in 1964.

Nor did Franca always wait for the money to arrive before

Alexander Grant commissioned James Kudelka's Washington Square. Shown below are Peter Schaufuss (far left), as Morris Townsend, Charles Kirby (far right), as Dr. Sloper, and members of the company.



Andrew Oxenham

she spent it. Long-time supporters will tell of panic-filled late-night phone calls when the company's forthright director would ask for an urgent loan to pay off an hotel-keeper on tour or to give the dancers their weekly pittance.

Two of Franca's most outrageous spending sprees also turned out to be her wisest. In moving to the vast O'Keefe stage—and to fit the similarly scaled touring venues that began to pop up like mushrooms in the country's major centres—Franca knew that much of her old repertoire would have to go. If it was not too dilapidated, it was too small and intimate to register with far-away audience members in the big new theatres. So, she took a gamble on John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*.

"I had known for a long time how talented John was," says Franca, "but it was actually Grant Strate who had seen the production and recommended it. I was willing to trust his judgment." Knowing it would cost a small fortune, Franca managed to sell her board on *Romeo and Juliet* with a price-tag of \$20,000. As she—and some of them—must have guessed, it was to cost much more. Three times as much, in fact—a very large sum for an arts organization in 1964.

A similar scenario was repeated eight years later, when the National Ballet ended up paying close to \$400,000 for Rudolf Nureyev's egocentric version of *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Both productions, however, are still with us. They have earned their keep and, in the meantime, have provided marvellous vehicles in which to display the company's remarkable crop of ballerinas. Think of the teenaged Veronica Tennant, plucked from the National Ballet School to become the company's first Juliet and beamed to a Canada-wide audience courtesy of Norman Campbell and CBC television. Think of Karen Kain, solid as a rock in the perilous balances of the Rose Adagio in *The Sleeping Beauty*. And remember Vanessa Harwood and Nadia Potts, bringing style and individuality to their dancing.

Then, turn your mind to the later, but no less significant stream of home-trained male dancers who began to jostle the women for pride of place among the company's most estimable performers.

They would not have been there, of course, had it not been for Celia Franca's insistence on having a school. Once she had bullied her board of directors into it, the whole enterprise was passed, in 1959, to the company's ballet mistress, Betty Oliphant. By the mid-1970s, the National Ballet of Canada was predominantly a company that Oliphant had trained.

Some critics said the results were sterile and robotic, lacking personality and passion; yet the dancers soon began to collect medals in prestigious international competitions. And they gave the National Ballet's audience what every classical ballet audience wants—identifiable stars.

THE CRITICS ALSO GRUMBLED about what they saw as the lack of Canadian creativity in the country's largest ballet troupe. Certainly, the National Ballet has never had the kind of commitment to homegrown creators—choreographers, designers, composers—as, say, the younger Les Grands Ballets Canadiens or the senior member of the big three, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. But, then, it is a different kind of company, the only equivalent to one of Europe's great state or municipal companies that we possess. A degree of conservatism is part of the classical aesthetic, but it has not banished artistic adventure.

A new crop of company choreographers was already emerging in the later years of Celia Franca's regime—

The Curtain Rises: Celia Franca Remembers



Ken Bell

□ Lois Smith and David Adams in *Giselle*.

The National Ballet of Canada made its official debut at Toronto's Eaton Auditorium on November 12, 1951. A group of local ballet supporters had originally summoned Celia Franca to Canada to conduct a survey of existing conditions and to report on the potential for establishing a "national" company. Franca soon found herself swept up in a public whirlwind of expectation. She presented a small troupe of 12 dancers in well-received concert performances in Toronto and Montreal, and followed this up with a special summer school.

The moment was ripe to take a bold step and launch the new company formally. While many of the National Ballet Guild's directors were still uneasy about the financial implications, one of its most forthright and enthusiastic members, Pearl Whitehead, went ahead and booked Eaton Auditorium for an inaugural season—three nights each in November 1951 and in January and April of the following year.

Celia Franca, with financial support from the Canadian Dance Teachers' Association, quickly embarked on a country-wide audition tour. The company of 28 dancers she assembled

was short on experience, but long on enthusiasm. Few besides former Winnipeg Ballet star David Adams and the Latvian couple Irene Apiné and Jury Gotshalks had any significant professional ballet experience.

The troupe rehearsed feverishly in the historic, but run-down St. Lawrence Hall, where they competed for space with rats from the farmers' market next door and with pigeons who found the building's interior cornices an ideal nesting ground.

A young George Crum, wrested from the Royal Conservatory's opera school, had a total of six hours to rehearse a 19-piece orchestra. The dancers heard it for the first time only on opening night.

Franca's choice of program for that first show was carefully designed to fit within the dancers' abilities and to present, in micro-cosmic form, the kind of artistic path she wanted her new company to follow. It was a blend of classic and contemporary, led off by Fokine's *Les Sylphides*. Franca, whose early choreography had won praise during her career in England, contributed *The Dance of Salomé*. She used the spirited Act I pas de deux from *Giselle* to show off the partnering skill of David Adams and the lyricism of his wife, Lois Smith. Vancouver choreographer Kay Armstrong staged her *Etude*, to music by Tchaikovsky. Franca chose the *Polovetsian Dances* from Prince Igor to give a rousing demonstration of virile male dancing.

The moment of truth had arrived. An audience of notables, including more than a few sceptics, gathered to pass judgment.

Dance in Canada has invited Celia Franca to recall the event. Here is her account:

HECTIC, ORGANIZED, EXCITING. Those are the words that best recall our first performance. There was an unexpressed, but emphatic feeling among us all that we were embarking on something extremely important. There was not, to use modern jargon, one bad vibration.

Of course, everything was inadequate—more than just

the Eaton Auditorium's small stage and unraked seating.

The décor for *Les Sylphides* was just a simple backdrop. We couldn't afford painted wings in those days. I had had it designed by a Toronto man, James Pape. I think the first time I actually saw it finished was the dress rehearsal. I looked, and my heart sank. It was all daubed in white! I asked what on earth had happened. It turned out that the man who actually painted the backdrop had added all the white "snow". "But why?" I asked. "I thought it would look more Canadian," was the reply. All I could think of was how to hide that infernal backdrop. In the end, I believe we smothered it in gloom—32 blue gels, the darkest possible.

Incidentally, the electrician who showed up for the actual performance was not the one who had been at the dress rehearsal. Fortunately, the dancers were too inexperienced to appreciate the awful implications. As it happened, there were only a few technical hitches.

It was pouring rain outside, but I don't remember anything about the weather because we were in the theatre all day.

I can't even remember if there was a reception afterwards, although I suppose there must have been.

I can remember sitting in a tiny dressing-room, being continually interrupted by a stream of people, all with problems. One girl was having trouble with her make-up. Another's feet had swollen, and she couldn't get into her pointe shoes. Someone else had a "blank" and couldn't remember her steps. Meanwhile, I was trying to get made up for *Salomé*!

Thank heavens for Kay Ambrose. She was wonderful—and was to design many ballets for us. She had come over from England to help me and was to remain a constant help for several years after. Kay, who chain-smoked her way through the evening, took care of all the problems.

Continued on next page

PROGRAM	
<p>The National Ballet Guild of Canada presents The Canadian National Ballet Artistic Director: CELIA FRANCA</p>	
I	
LES SYLPHIDES	
Music by Chopin Decor by James Pape	Choreography by Fokine
Nocturne: Lois Smith, Joyce Hill, Celia Franca, David Adams, Myrna Aaron, Colleen Kenney, Natalia Butko, Connie Campbell, Diane Childerhouse, Judie Colpman, Maria Dynowska, Vera Kena, Angela Leigh, Marilyn Rolis, Katharine Stewart, Mary Tsochina, Elena Trieste, Olivia Wyatt	
Valse	Joyce Hill
Mazurka	Lois Smith
Mazurka	David Adams
Preude	Celia Franca
Valse	Lois Smith and David Adams
Finale	Ensemble
INTERMISSION	
II	
THE DANCE OF SALOME	
A dance-drama based on the Oscar Wilde play, "Salomé"	
Music by James Hartley Decor by Robert Hall	Orchestrated by Oscar Morawetz Choreography by Celia Franca Costumes by Gerald Butler
Salome	Celia Franca
Herod	Jury Gotshalks
Herodias	Natalia Butko
Jokanaan—The Prophet	Grant Strate
Young Syrian, Captain of the Guard	David Adams
Soldiers	Walter Foster, Earl Kraul, Brian Macdonald, Howard Meadows
Page	Colleen Kenney
Jews	Andre Dufresne, Fergus Hunter, Robert Ito
Slaves	Maria Dynowska, Lillian Jarvis, Angela Leigh, Katharine Stewart
Executioner	Edmundo Fraser
INTERMISSION	
III	
Pas de Deux from GISELLE—Act I	
Music by Burgmüller	Choreography by Coralli-Perrot
Lois Smith and David Adams	
INTERMISSION	
IV	
ETUDE	
Music by Tchaikovsky Choreography and Costumes by Kay Armstrong	
Natalia Butko, Maria Dynowska, Katharine Stewart, Earl Kraul	
INTERMISSION	
V	
Polovetsian Dances from PRINCE IGOR	
Music by Borodin Decor by Alan Lett	Choreography by Fokine Costumes by Suzanne Mess
A Polovetsian Warrior	Jury Gotshalks
A Polovetsian Girl	Joyce Hill
The Chief Slave	Lillian Jarvis
Slaves	Natalia Butko, Katharine Stewart, Myrna Aaron, Judie Colpman, Maria Dynowska, Colleen Kenney, Elena Trieste, Olivia Wyatt
Polovetsian Girls	Diane Childerhouse, Vera Kena, Marilyn Rolis, Mary Tsochina
Polovetsian Warriors	Walter Foster, Brian Macdonald, Earl Kraul, Grant Strate
Polovetsian Boys	Andre Dufresne, Fergus Hunter, Robert Ito, Howard Meadows



□ Earl Kraul, Oldyna Dynowska, Katherine Stewart and Natalia Butko in Kay Armstrong's *Etude*.

Continued from preceding page

She flitted from room to room, helping dancers with their hairstyles and make-up. She was an absolute marvel.

The performance itself went very well. Our audience was very kind, understanding our inexperience, but sensing the potential professionalism. I suppose there was a lot of curiosity, and there were men dragged in by their wives.

There were 29 dancers, including myself. I had not intended to dance in Canada, but I simply had to since there were not enough experienced soloists in those early days.

The dancers were paid a pittance, but right from the start I insisted that once they joined the National Ballet they should do nothing else. Professionalism did, indeed, exist from the beginning.

I couldn't go out front because I was made up to dance *Salomé*, so I watched everything from the wings. I was terrified somebody would miss an entrance. We all got through on adrenalin.

I don't think I'm boasting if I say the dancers were very well-rehearsed. There was no question of not knowing what came next. During the rehearsals we had none of those five-minute breaks they have now. I don't think the dancers then were any the worse for it. I was not cruel, but they say I was a hard and fast taskmaster.

At that opening performance I got a tremendous lift. I think we achieved a remarkable quality. In *Prince Igor*, the energy was incredible. The dancers got stitches in their sides and loved it! There was a great crashing of bows on the stage, and the dust flew in clouds. What it lacked in sophistication was amply made up in enthusiasm.

Les Sylphides was very different. The dancers created a feeling of lyricism I've never been able to achieve since.

At that first night I already had an overall vision. I've always been romantic, and in my heart I knew I was setting out to build a lasting institution. I had a firm conviction of this. The difficult task that remained was to impart that conviction to others.

—Celia Franca

Timothy Spain, Ann Ditchburn, James Kudelka and the European immigrant Constantin Patsalas. David Haber, Franca's immediate successor, commissioned the most ambitious work to spring from the imagination of these promising dance-makers—Ditchburn's *Mad Shadows*. It was not a masterpiece, but it was very impressive and gave the dancers what they always crave—original roles.

It was left to Alexander Grant, who followed Haber in 1976, boldly to take *Mad Shadows* to New York and to follow up by commissioning an equally ambitious ballet, *Washington Square*, from Kudelka.

Both Ditchburn and Kudelka abandoned the company under Grant, making little secret of their feeling that the director's commitment to creativity was superficial. Patsalas stayed and had ample opportunity to choreograph, although he, too, frequently complained that the support from the front office was insufficient.

Grant left, under a cloud, in 1983—a year before the full expiry date of his second contract. For all his ebullience, incomparable character dancing and judicious repertoire-building, he had ultimately failed to provide the kind of leadership the National Ballet's dancers demanded.

Perhaps, Grant mused at the time, the dancers wanted too much, were too prone to expect others to take responsibility for their own artistic growth. There may have been truth to the claim. More than one visiting choreographer has commented on the general passivity of the dancers, their "tell me what to do next" attitude.

Some have even blamed the School for over-protecting its students, of damping their youthful fires. Could things have become too comfortable and routine for the relatively cosseted dancers of the National Ballet?

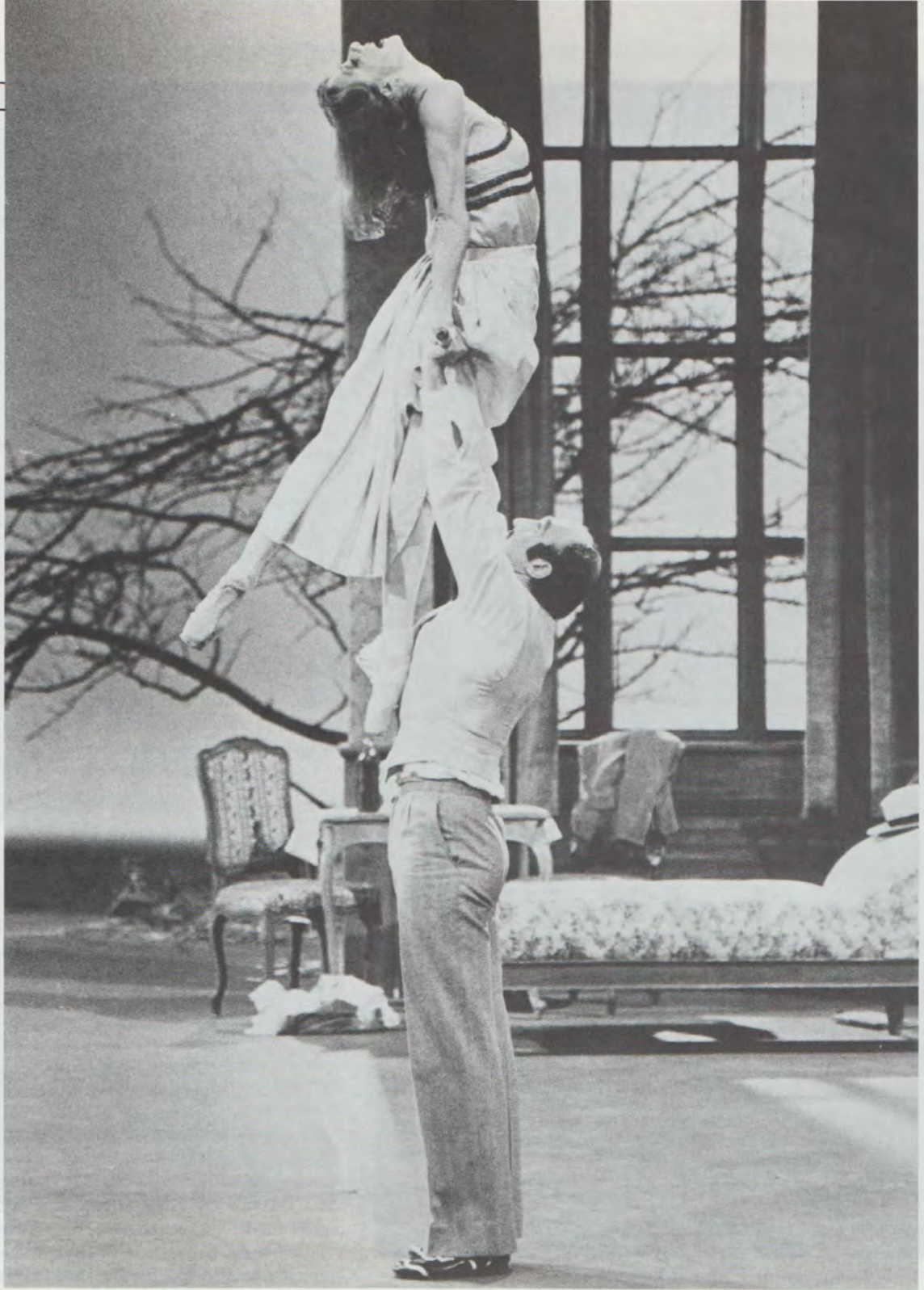
Erik Bruhn thought so. He told me as much over lunch, just shortly after it was announced late in 1982 that he would be taking over from Grant the following July. "I don't feel they have always been challenged in the right way," he said. "Some of them are trading on the past. They take things by right. They will have to prove to me that they deserve it." He even ran down the company roster and suggested a few names. Some of these disappeared under Bruhn's turbulent 32-month reign. Others were recharged and came out stronger than ever.

The dancers, as a company, were transfixed and galvanized by Bruhn's charismatic leadership. While Grant had, both on and offstage, so often been comic and congenial, Bruhn was every inch an aristocrat. He could be friendly and warm, but there was an aloofness and distance that separated him from the rest. Both as man and artist, he was the inspiration the dancers had longed for.

In many ways, it was the style of his leadership, as much as his substantive achievements, that counted. With a few bold strokes, he opened up the National Ballet to outsiders. He made it part of the community of dance in Canada. He shocked his audiences with works by Robert Desrosiers, David Earle and Danny Grossman; and, for the few he may have lost, he brought in many fresh faces and engendered a real atmosphere of expectation and excitement.

NOW ERIK BRUHN IS GONE, the company is marking another important anniversary and the future without him is far from secure. Officially, of course, everything is running smoothly. The members of the artistic team Bruhn assembled, former dancer Valerie Wilder and British ballet mistress and *répétiteur* Lynn Wallis, have passed from their

Mary Jago and
Hazaros
Surmeyan in
Ann Ditchburn's
production of
Mad Shadows,
which was
commissioned by
David Haber.



titles as, respectively, artistic administrator and artistic co-ordinator to become "co-associate artistic directors". And the National Ballet's board of directors has a "watchdog" committee to monitor the company's artistic development. But no search is underway for another Bruhn.

The fact is there could be no other Bruhn. He was one of the National Ballet's biggest strokes of good fortune, introduced to the company in the mid-1960s by his friend Celia Franca and, as teacher, producer and choreographer, one of its closest artistic associates from then on.

Mapping out the future, Wilder and Wallis explain how integral they were to the company's operation under Bruhn. "We really were a team," says Wilder, measuring every word

for its potential resonance. "The loss of Erik could have thrown the company into a tailspin, but we shared in his plans and feel committed to seeing them carried out."

But what happens after that? At a certain point—very soon, in fact—it will be the decisions of these two ladies that shape the future of the National Ballet. Competence, efficiency and dedication are not quite the same as leadership. That's an intangible thing, a compound of personality and genius. It's a heavy and awesome burden that has been dropped in the laps of Wilder and Wallis. One wishes them the best of it—for all our sakes. ●

Michael Crabb is a CBC radio producer for State of the Arts.

Decidedly Jazz Danceworks

It's About Time . . .

by Vilnis Muiznieks

JAZZ DANCE. For many of us it means *Flashdance*, trendy jazzercise classes or long-legged, Vegas-style chorus girls strutting their stuff. This doesn't sit well with Vicki Willis, choreographer and artistic director of Calgary's Decidedly Jazz Danceworks.

For Willis, jazz dance is "rhythm, soul, improvisation, dance with roots and feelings in the black vernacular". She feels there are few places today where one can experience the traditional spirit of jazz dance. And Willis knows her jazz.

Teaching since 1966, she has introduced hundreds of people to jazz dance. She has taught students at the University of Calgary for the past 14 years; as well, her workshops and classes have reached such diverse groups as high-school students, The Young Canadians and professional dance teachers. It has been said that Vicki Willis is one of the best jazz instructors in the country.

Over the past 16 years, she has visited the jazz centres of the world—including New York, Los Angeles, Paris and London—to research the history and present state of jazz music and dance, as well as to study with renowned teachers such as Luigi, Jo Jo Smith, Betsy Haug and Matt Mattox.

Willis has a deep respect for the history of jazz and frowns on the "plastic energy" found today in many commercial productions. "It's sad that jazz has grown so far away from what it was initially, from where it began," she comments. "People have constantly had to compromise to fit it into situations such as the Broadway show, the Vegas act or the *Flashdance* movie. By emphasizing the potential flashiness of the dance form, they often lose the form's traditional focus—a very personal expression of rhythm and soul."

That's where Decidedly Jazz Danceworks comes in. The company was established three years ago, and its long-term objective is to create an awareness of and encourage respect for the integrity, spirit and traditions of jazz dance through workshops, lecture-demonstrations and performances.

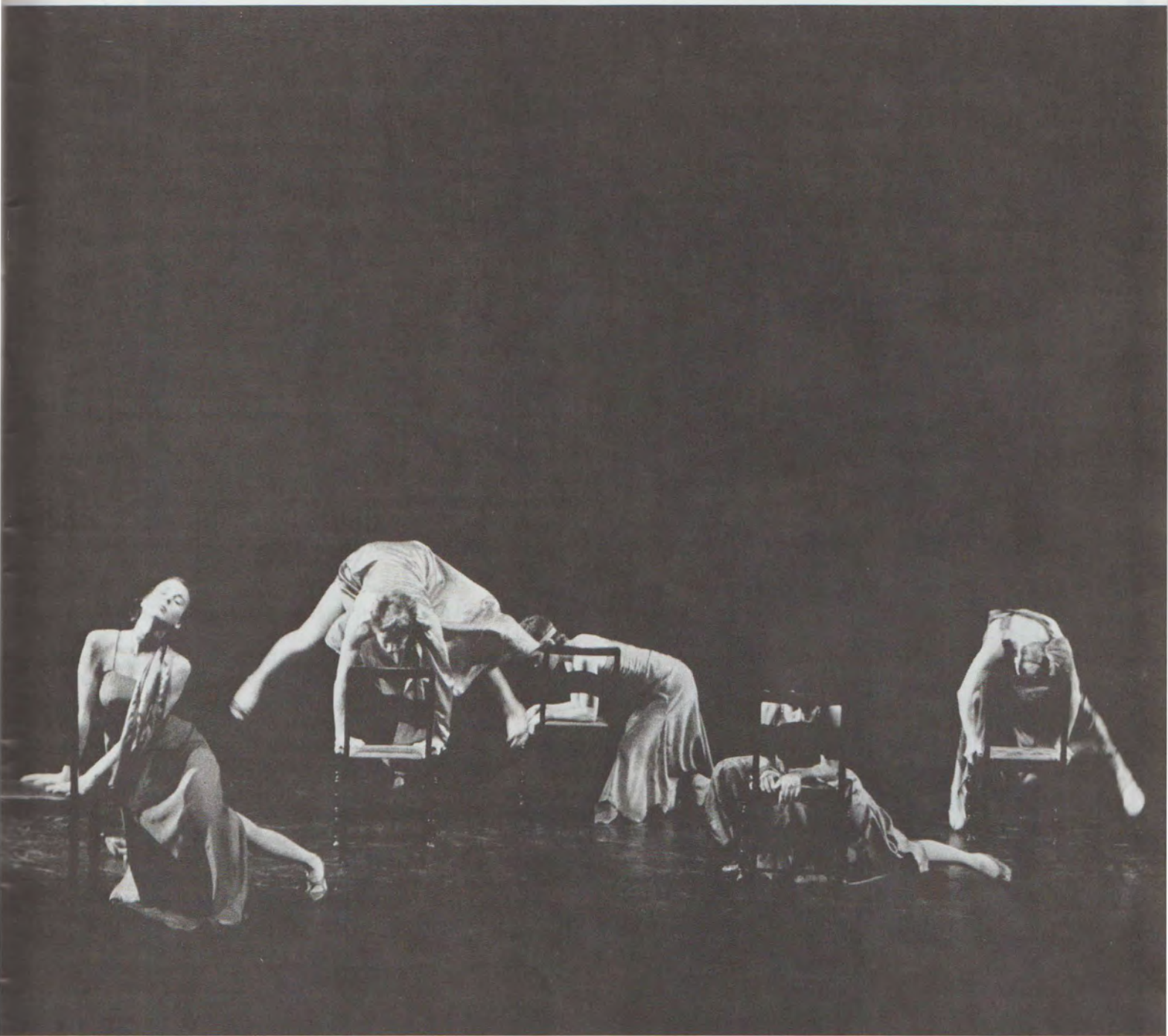
THE FIRST STEP to a deeper appreciation of jazz dance is to understand its roots. Jazz dance came to North America by way of black African slaves. Dance was a natural and necessary outlet for their emotions. Abruptly uprooted from their African homes and subjected to degradation in America, the slaves danced to the remembered rhythms of community rituals.

Jazz dancing originated in the blending of African tribal dance and European dance elements in America. Because of



Vicki Willis, artistic director of Decidedly Jazz Danceworks.

Paul Stefan



Members of Decidedly Jazz Danceworks (left to right: Christy Hayne, Hannah Stilwell, Erin O'Connor, Michele Moss and Donna Larson) in performance.

Barbara Harrison Photography/Graphics

the importance African dance placed on improvisation by providing individual freedom of expression, the evolution and diffusion of basic African movements were encouraged.

Slaves watched their white masters dance and then mocked them—to amuse themselves and, incidentally, any whites sufficiently perceptive to notice. Although the improvisations had to be relatively tame to avoid reprimands, the use of satire was significant, as it introduced a richly creative avenue of expression for blacks. Humour has played a great part in the evolution of jazz dance.

This creativity extended to plantation jiggging contests, where contestants took turns trying to best one another while their masters wagered on the outcome. One-upmanship, an-

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other trait of Afro-American dance, was serious business, because the best dancers received special privileges from the plantation owners.

From these beginnings, jazz dance evolved through the minstrel shows to vaudeville and, by the early 20th century, to all-black musicals on Broadway. Throughout this period the blending of Afro-American dance elements with those of many European dance forms continued, with the more rhythmic and fluid elements of the former having the greater overall influence.

In the 1920s and '30s, dances such as the Charleston, Black Bottom and Jitterbug popularized jazz dance.

Since the 1940s, when the "Swing Era" ended, jazz dance has undergone many changes. Theatre forms such as the modern jazz movement initiated by Jack Cole added a new dimension to jazz dance. Social dances like the Twist; disco; several waves of group and single dances, including the Bop, Frug, Jerk and Boogaloo; and today's street-dance forms, such as popping, waving and breaking, are all part of its evolution.

Unfortunately, repeated dilutions over the years have cost the dance form much of its character. Some of the recent deterioration can be blamed on jazz teachers who don't understand the essence of the form. The danger is that eventually its true message may be totally lost, leaving behind only a few jazzy embroideries.

BUT NOT IF DECIDEDLY JAZZ can help it. If the response to the company's debut performances in Calgary and Edmonton is any indication, Decidedly Jazz Danceworks could very well make a lasting impression. Presenting a wide range of jazz styles, the company's versatile dancers have electrified audiences with Vicki Willis' choreography to the music of such jazz greats as Dave Brubeck, Miles Davis, Duke Ellington and "Fats" Waller.

A large part of the company's initial success can be attributed to Willis' solid reputation. Since 1970 she has consistently excited audiences while choreographing dances for nearly every dance and theatre company in Calgary.

"Her dances are very engaging and compelling. They appeal to people's kinesthetic sense," says Anne Flynn, an independent artist and University of Calgary dance instructor.

But there's a lot more to the Decidedly Jazz formula than exceptional choreography. Other essential ingredients include the appeal of the dance form itself and, of course, very strong jazz dancers.

"The dance form is very accessible to ordinary people," says Damon Johnston, the company's general manager. "They can relate to it."

Exploring the many moods and movements of jazz dance is where Decidedly Jazz excels. It also helps to have dynamic, exciting dancers whose individual personalities shine through onstage. Much of this can be attributed to Willis' approach to choreography, which encourages individual expression.

"Vicki is an absolute delight to work with because she allows her dancers to be part of the creative process," says Hannah Stilwell, one of the original company dancers.

Stilwell speaks enthusiastically of the "magic in rehearsal" when a new piece is being choreographed: "Vicki might start with a germ of an idea, and then she just lets us go to town. There's all kinds of super, super high energy and excitement, because we're all contributing. She's very open to it, appreciates it and gives us credit."

Denise Clarke, a Calgary independent performing artist

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and teacher, agrees: "Improvisation is very important to Vicki. That way, she sees the soul inherent in the person, the elusive part of jazz. She watches how a dancer reacts to an idea, then capitalizes on that for a natural effect. The audience is comfortable because the dancers are comfortable."

NOW, IF ONLY THE SIZE of the company's pocket-book was as comforting. Predictably, financial uncertainties have forced Decidedly Jazz Danceworks to move cautiously toward its goal of becoming a full-time professional company. Not wanting to over-extend itself, Decidedly Jazz has taken everything step-by-step.

According to Hannah Stilwell, the main objective has been "to be sure that the product is what it should be". Now, however, buoyed by enthusiastic audience response, the company is poised for the crucial next step: touring its productions—a full-time commitment.

Individual financial sacrifices will be required. If fund-raising schemes fail, the company could go under; yet, the decision to "go for it" has been unreservedly welcomed by everyone involved. They feel that enough time has been spent "testing the waters".

"It's the best possible thing that could happen," says Stilwell, who, like the others, will have to cut back significantly on other obligations in order to dance full-time for the company.

"Other commitments used to interfere," explains Michele Moss, another of the original company dancers. Like Stilwell, she is looking forward to having everyone together daily, rather than just intensively before a performance. Asked about the company's prospects, Moss unhesitatingly replies, "No question—it's going to work!"

Damon Johnston predicts that "the greatest challenge will be the first two years—financially, psychologically. Working as a unit." Facing critics outside Alberta will also provide a big test.

One of Johnston's immediate concerns is "to make the company more visible". As a start, a grant from the Alberta Foundation for the Performing Arts is being used to create a promotional package to help market Decidedly Jazz Danceworks, with the initial focus on Western Canada.

Johnston's strategy for promoting the company and securing contracts with communities is simple: "All I want to do is get people to see it *once*—because, after that first time, I'm sure they'll want more."

His strategy seems to be working. The successes of last summer—which included performances at the Dance in Canada conference in Vancouver, Edmonton's Fringe Festival, Spruce Grove's Son of Fringe Festival and the Canada Pavilion at Expo 86—have helped bring the company a number of offers from towns in Alberta.

The dances the company tours are all Vicki Willis' creations; and they bring to life many of the classics of jazz music. "The music selections are joined together with people talking about jazz, primarily about what jazz is and what jazz means to them," she explains.

One of the shows Decidedly Jazz has been touring is called *It's About Time*, which its choreographer says is "about time in an historical sense and in a musical or rhythmical sense".

Willis adds, "It's about time people became aware of the unique spirit of this rich, multi-dimensional dance form."

With Decidedly Jazz Danceworks, something decidedly important has been happening to jazz dance in Calgary. And it's about time to "spread the jazz". ●

A New Festival:

Bringing the Canadian Dance Community Together



Ottawa's National Arts Centre

by Hilary McLaughlin

CANADA DANCE FESTIVAL DANSE CANADA is a major festival of Canadian dance that will take place in Ottawa from June 29 to July 12.

"The dance community wanted to move the focus of the Dance in Canada Association's annual meetings from a conference format to a festival format," explains Steve Dymond, the Association's executive director.

Dance programming at the National Arts Centre is one of the principal reasons for the development of an informed and growing dance audience in Ottawa. And for the past three years there has been Dance! An Ottawa Summer Festival, co-produced by Le Groupe de la Place Royale and Theatre Ballet of Canada. It has exploited spaces beyond the Arts Centre's rich array of offerings to make dance visible throughout the city each July.

So, with participants from these three groups—Dymond from the Dance in Canada Association, Yvan Saintonge from the National Arts Centre, and Marlin Clapson and Gordon Pearson from Dance! An Ottawa Summer Festival—serving

as executive producers, planning for the first Canada Dance Festival Danse Canada began.

"The annual Dance in Canada conference is within the Festival, but the Festival does not exist without it," declares Saintonge, producer of the dance and variety department at the National Arts Centre. "There was a need for a change expressed by the dance community. It was right for the Dance in Canada Association, the National Arts Centre and the Ottawa Festival to do a big Canadian dance festival. And it's in Ottawa because we have the audience."

Monique Michaud, head of the Canada Council's Dance Section, concurs about the suitability of the Festival's venue. "The National Arts Centre has something to do with it—there's not as good a space in Toronto or Montreal or Vancouver," she says. "And, of course, many companies don't get to dance at the National Arts Centre that often. It offers a good setting for foreign buyers to see them perform."

Adds Barbara Laskin, assistant head of the Dance Section of the Canada Council, "They want a good showcase.

Dancers and companies are not all that satisfied with contact programs."

LURING THE FOREIGN BUYERS. That is one of the objectives of Canada Dance Festival Danse Canada. The Department of External Affairs has been approached to contribute financially to the Festival's \$1-million-plus budget, in an effort to guarantee the presence of international buyers from Europe, Australia, Japan—places that have expressed interest in presenting Canadian dance.

Michel Lemay, head of the arts promotion division (theatre/dance) at the Department of External Affairs, is enthused about bringing Canadian artists and international buyers together. And Barbara Laskin believes that "festivals work for the foreign impresarios because they can see a good deal in a week."

The emphasis will be on the marketing of Canadian dancers to impresarios. Ron Holgerson, marketing and communications co-ordinator of the Touring Office of the Canada Council, explains that one of his projects involves the bringing together of major Canadian dance presenters, be they individuals or representatives of facilities that program dance, at workshops during the Festival.

The Touring Office, in sponsoring five-day workshops for dance-tour organizers, will be dealing with agents, artists' representatives and other related personnel, "going through the motions of a major tour and applying theory to practice". Marketing is the name of the game. The workshop participants will be taught, or re-taught, much about the mechanics of budgeting, marketing and, generally, planning tours for dance.

THE FESTIVAL'S EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS point out that the conference element will be a significant part of Canada Dance Festival Danse Canada. There will be workshops, seminars, panel discussions and special focus days. As well as classes, there will be workshops for professional dancers. There will be a board development day. There will be a special day focusing on Canada's professional dance schools. There will be displays of dance videos.

But the emphasis will be on performances. "The theme of the Festival," says Yvan Saintonge, "is creation. There will be many world premieres in Ottawa." Steve Dymond, while noting that due to time constraints not all individual artists and companies will be able to prepare works specifically for this year's Festival, points out that they will at least bring works from their most recent seasons.

Dymond, Saintonge, Clapson and Pearson have all had enough enquiries and expressions of interest to ensure that, even in the relatively short space of time between the inception and execution of this year's Festival, creation will dominate.

CANADA DANCE FESTIVAL DANSE CANADA will run for two weeks. "We hope the entire Canadian dance community will come together in Ottawa," exclaims Dymond. For those who are unable to attend, there will likely be opportunities to catch highlights of the Festival on television.

Gordon Pearson discusses scheduling: "We'll build up to the week of July 4th. The first week, there will be more at noon-hour, as well as evening events at Theatre Ballet's studios and those of Le Groupe. [There will be] promotions on

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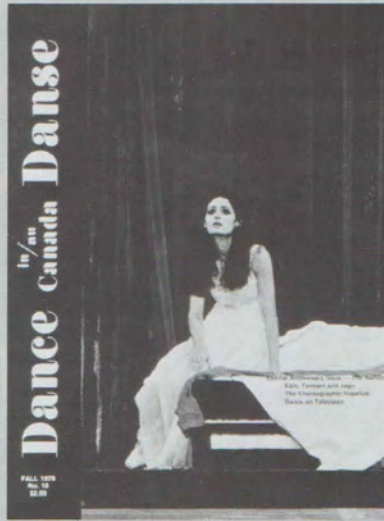
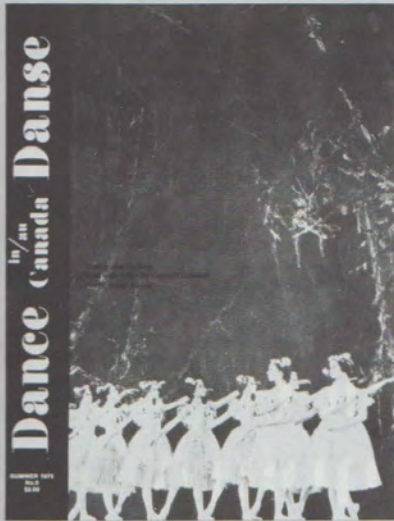
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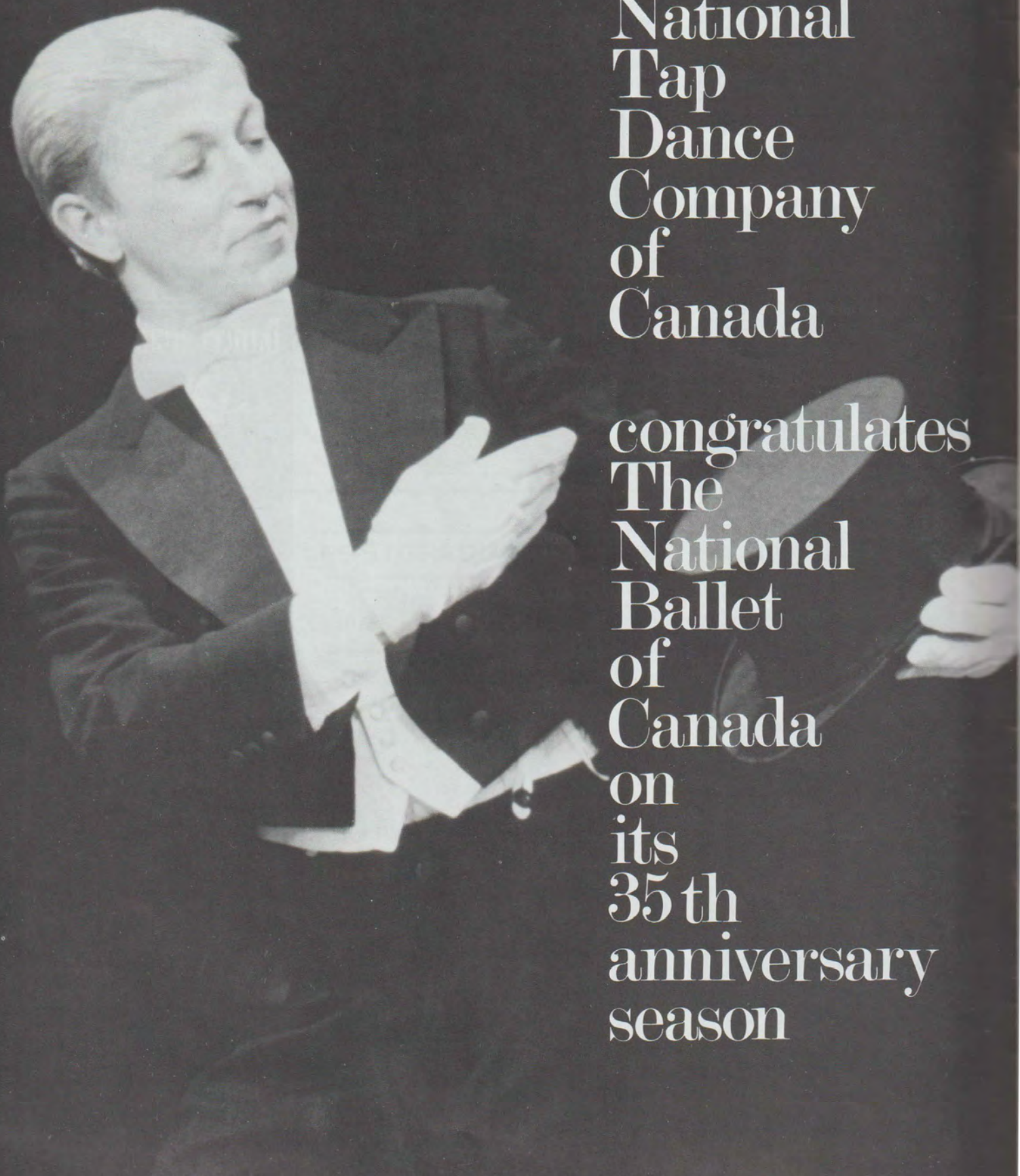
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the Sparks Street Mall. Things like that." The conference elements and National Arts Centre performances will occur during the second week of the Festival.

As in past Ottawa summer festivals, many venues and stages will be used for the more than 100 scheduled performances. The locations range from the plaza at the Bank of Canada to the triangular space in front of the Cenotaph. As well as the Opera, Theatre and Studio at the National Arts Centre, terraces and grassy spots in the grounds of the Centre will be used, as will an adjacent park.

The National Capital Commission supports the Festival, and there will be an official "dance site" included in the July 1st Canada Day celebrations that traditionally draw tens of thousands of people to Ottawa (and are broadcast across the country).

Yvan Saintonge and his colleagues hope that "for those two weeks, everywhere you turn around in central Ottawa, you'll encounter dance".

THE FESTIVAL HAS THE CHANCE to be a major sensation. While Monique Michaud has observed that festivals can sometimes have a brief downside effect, restraining a local audience's appetite and entertainment budget for a while after the event, this may not be a problem in Ottawa. The National Arts Centre's dance season, which opens with international programming this year, will not begin until some weeks after the Festival has ended.

Canada Dance Festival Danse Canada has several great goals, all of which seem realizable. "It will be a valuable contact opportunity for professional performers in terms of foreign touring," says Gordon Pearson. "It will, we hope, establish a successful means of bringing the whole dance community together. And, most of all, it should encourage and stimulate new choreography." •

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The performance on Wednesday, July 8, at the National Arts Centre will feature Frank Augustyn, Lynn Seymour, Winthrop Corey and Linda Maybarduk in José Limón's *The Moor's Pavane*; Jennifer Penney and Wayne Eagling in a pas de deux from Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon*; Peter Schaufuss and Peter Ottmann in Maurice Béjart's *Song of a Wayfarer*; and Evelyn Hart and Glen Koryk in Jacques Lemay's *Le Jazz Hot*.

(All programming and casting subject to change)



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Point of View:

Artistic Vision for Canada's Major Ballet Companies

by **Jeanne Renaud**

The following is the text of an address given by Jeanne Renaud, co-artistic director of Montreal's Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, at the 1986 Dance in Canada conference in Vancouver.

THE MAJOR BALLET COMPANIES want to be at the heart of the action and be an important catalyst in the evolution of dance. In addition to this primary goal, the companies have to develop a repertoire of the most probing works from the various periods when ballet has been an important component in the development of the arts.

One of these crucial moments was certainly the beginning of the 20th century. At that time, Serge Diaghilev was not only a precursor in dance, but also in the formation of a totally new understanding of the artistic practice.

In considering the importance of companies such as Les Grands Ballets Canadiens today, we become aware of the major roles for our company. Firstly, the development of the public's knowledge of works that have marked our past and those works that are linked to today's creations. Secondly, the development of dancers, the artist, the interpreter and the re-creator.

AT THE BEGINNING of this century, ballet was the initiator of great meetings of artists through remarkable productions. Lincoln Kirstein has written that Diaghilev, as much as the commercial dealers, promoted the "golden age" of modern art. By inviting painters to conceive and produce sets from blown-up paintings and other elements directly on the stage, ballet stimulated a revolution in stage design.

Ballet was at the very heart of the avant-garde movement at the beginning of the century. Today, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens wants to have that place.

The creators of all disciplines live genuine experiences rooted in similar and parallel preoccupations that reflect the issues raised in their cultural period. Ballet has once again broadened its vocabulary; and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens is part of that, by encouraging so many choreographers to express themselves by embracing and using other art media (stage design, lighting and music), as well as the dance form itself—an amalgamation that opens new doors to our choreographers.

There will always be those who provoke the evolution and



Jeanne Renaud

Dominique Durocher

others, less adventurous, who will observe from a more conservative position.

The artistic vision of our dance companies today should surely be as close as possible to that contained in a text written by Serge Diaghilev on the occasion of an exhibition of Russian art mounted in Paris in 1906. "The current exhibition," he said, "is an overview of the development of our art seen through the Modern eye. All the developments that have exercised an immediate impact on the contemporary spirit of our country are represented here. This show is a true image of artistic Russia today with . . . its respectful admiration for the past and its ardent faith in the future."

The exhibition included some of the first abstract paintings produced by Russian artists. They were juxtaposed with traditional icon paintings, as icon paintings, with their complex system of abstraction, were the inspiration for the new works that would mark the whole art of the century. It seemed essential to Diaghilev to put them side-by-side in the same exhibition.

Serge Diaghilev did more than contribute—he created precedents for collaboration, for innovation, for quality standards, for funding, touring and programming which are still very much followed and applied today. Significantly, the creations of his artists are not only still performed, but are a sure attraction for audiences throughout the world. Any Diaghilev-related event held today creates tremendous international excitement and attention from fine and performing arts spheres, from scholars, from the media and the general public.

WHAT WE HAVE EXPERIENCED since the era of Diaghilev brings us to reflect on the vision against which we all have to measure ourselves. Certainly, preoccupations such as those motivating Diaghilev in his time are experienced in all disciplines. If we look at the past and consider the incredible masterworks created, the challenge is indeed formidable. But no one among us will refuse that challenge.

Experience has taught us how far the choreographer can go, and how essential it is for him or her to have access to the best and most sympathetic interpreters in order to fully realize his or her creation. Our artistic direction at Les Grands Ballets Canadiens encourages those experiences and gives total freedom to the creator to choose the adequate dancer-interpreters for the new creation.

The evolution of all art forms shows us how important flexibility is in the creative approach. In painting, for instance, the technical approach of an abstract painter differs radically from that of a figurative painter. If, to remain true to himself, the choreographic artist must change his style and vocabulary, his background can only serve to give him more possibilities of expressing himself in his chosen medium. Our artistic direction wants to enlarge the knowledge of modern technique, as well.

THE ARTISTIC VISION of this country must encourage the possibilities of seeing the works that we consider important in the whole of the existence of dance. We can look at and appreciate a Botticelli, a Matisse, a Michael Snow. We can listen to and love a work by Bach, by Debussy, by Philip Glass. We can be moved by a Shakespeare, a Brecht, a Peter Brook. Thus, we can be moved by the Romantic *Giselle*, Ba-

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dance. The country is so spread out; it remains important to build on what ensues from each big region.

Here in Quebec, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens has specific roles: completing the knowledge of a more developed *milieu* in modern dance and also keeping, in its more global vision and experiences, the whole of the danced phenomena.

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens has given much thought to these issues. We remain essentially concerned with the same preoccupations as our creators. As I mentioned at the beginning, we are at the heart of the action. •

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lanchine's streamlined *Agon* and the audacious dramatic images of Pina Bausch.

To get to the point where we can appreciate the masterpieces of the various periods of art, we require knowledge of those eras that have strongly marked our culture. In ballet, we need to restage those great works of the past to offer the young generations a chance to keep in touch with what is the heritage of our art form.

In Montreal, we were fortunate to have, straight from Europe, Ludmilla Chiriaeff, who founded the company that later became Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, and, as a guest artist, Anton Dolin, who was a direct link to Diaghilev's time and the companies, such as the Ballets Russes, that are a part of our heritage.

Our taste and cultural knowledge have developed through experiencing those great moments of dance that have also given us the desire to preserve, for the publics to come, the masterpieces of classical ballet.

OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP three major ballet companies in Canada stimulate those interested by dance. The country is so spread out; it remains important to build on what ensues from each big region.

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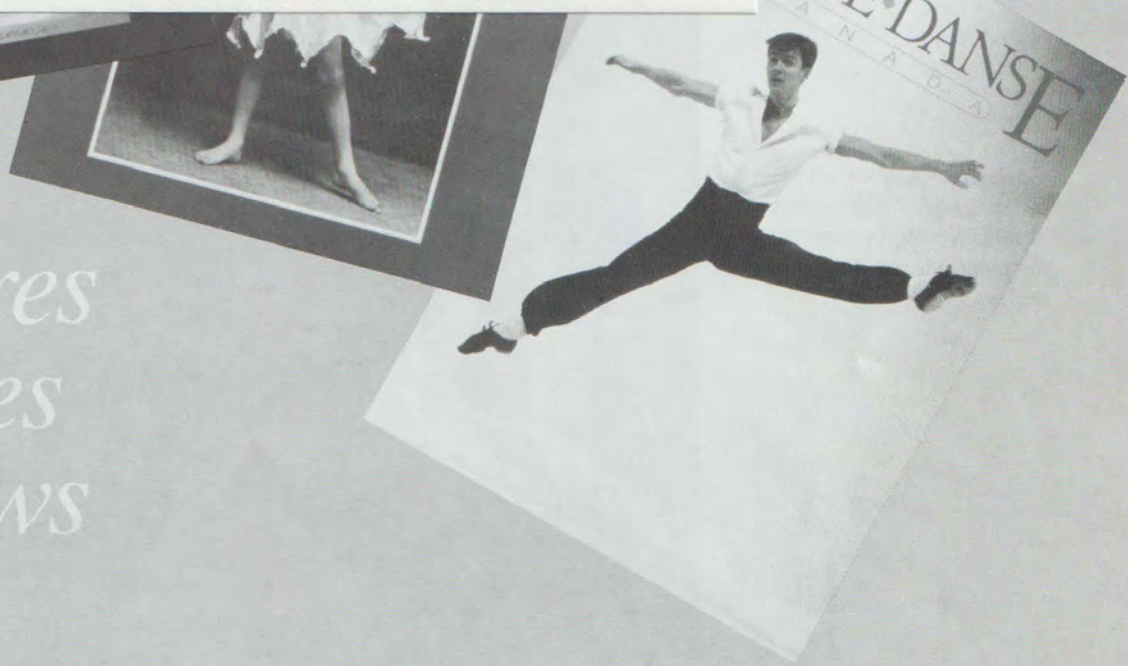
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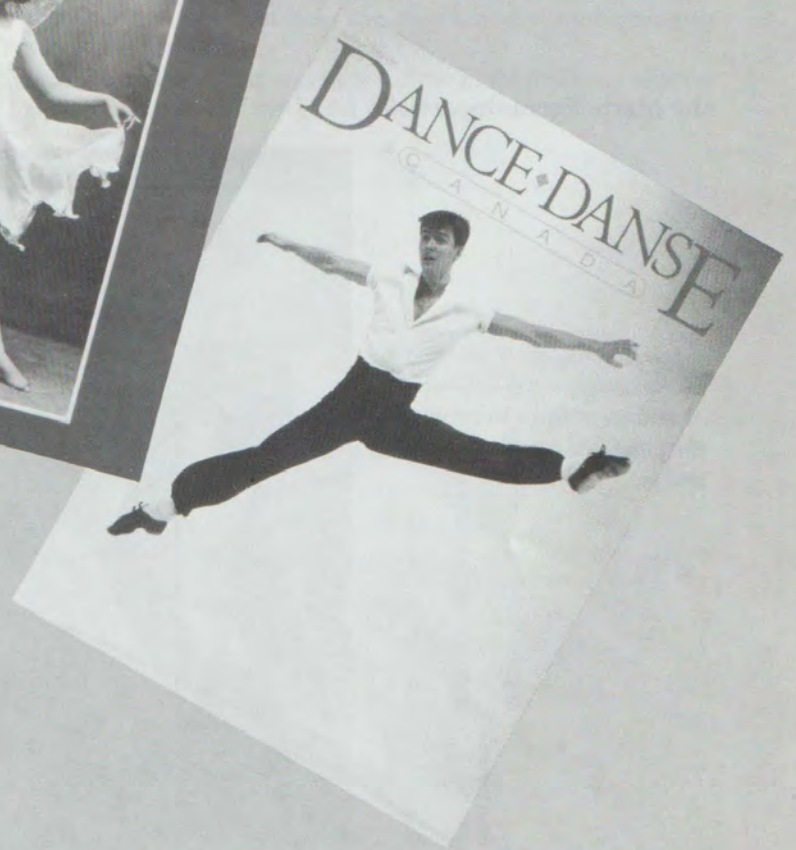
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Mediterranean Adventures:

A Cyprus Journal

by Maria Formolo, as told to Jean Ure

At the legendary birthplace of Aphrodite. "Just the wind, the sea and me."

Photographs by Helen Stylianou



LAST JUNE I TRAVELLED to Cyprus from my home in Edmonton, having accepted an invitation to dance at the Limassol International Arts Festival. My six-week residency in Limassol also included teaching in 13 different private dance schools (all part of the Limassol Dance Workshop), as well as choreographing a new piece for the Workshop, to be premiered at the Festival—less than three weeks after my arrival. A little bit of pressure for a premiere, to say the least!

The morning after my arrival on the island, I met with Nadia Nicolaides, president of the Limassol Dance Workshop, and the other 16 Workshop members to discuss the choreography that I would do for them. They approved my idea of a suite of three dances based on Ima Sumac's music of the South American Jivaro tribe. (I later named this piece *Running Towards the Light*.) We also discussed times and dates of classes I would teach at their dance schools.

The next day, I began rehearsals with members of the Workshop—14 teachers and three advanced students, all women. At first, I was really just feeling out what their movement potential was—and they were feeling me out as a teacher. It was an interesting experience, because I had to have everything translated. Some of the women spoke English quite well, but others didn't speak or understand it at all, so we used a lot of body communication.

Generally, the rehearsals went well, and over the next three weeks I enjoyed the work with the teachers. But there was a lot of political maneuvering going on—some of the women seemed to have a certain enmity for each other, and they were very competitive. Luckily for me, I don't speak Greek!

The women kept inviting me out for dinner, and I thought, "Oh, isn't this nice!" Then I found out they expected that if they invited me out to dinner I would give them solo parts!

CONTEMPORARY

The dancers I found most interesting were the older members of the Workshop—you felt they had lived through a bit. (By older, I mean 38, maybe 40 years of age.) So I did give a couple of them lead roles. Later, I found out that the younger members of the Workshop, some of whom were very insulted, had said, “Why does she use the old ones? They’re not as good as *we* are, and they’re *older!*”

THE EVENING OF MY FIRST FULL DAY on the island, I started teaching classes for the various schools. Most of the teachers in the Limassol Dance Workshop had their own studios, many in their homes. I was fascinated by the studios; some of them were very spacious and beautiful, while others were very, very small.

I’ve done a lot of teaching throughout my professional career. I’ve taught creative dance to very young children. I’ve worked within public-school systems and developed workshops for teachers who don’t have any formal training. I’ve

taught at professional-company levels. In touring Japan and China, I’ve had the experience of teaching children when there was a language difference.

But I wasn’t prepared for the problems I met with the Greek-Cypriot children. They talked *so* much—and they talked *all the time!* When you can’t chastise people—especially young children—in their own language, sometimes a situation can really get out of hand. Even getting a class organized to go from one corner of the studio to the other could present a major problem.

In many ways I found the situation on Cyprus difficult; and I felt I really wasn’t able to offer myself as a teacher, especially to the younger children. But certain schools, at least, had more of the needed discipline, and the teachers were right there to translate and help me through any problems that arose in class.

Another thing that was new for me in these classes was the extreme shyness of the girls. They were very, very shy and



Among the ruins of the Temple of Apollo. “No audience, no staging—just pleasure and personal harmony.”



Beside Aphrodite's Rock. "And I just danced."

weren't used to expressing themselves. They were used to ballet—and ballet at a certain level and in a certain way that fitted with their aesthetics. The larger, freer movements that might tend towards improvisation caused them to tighten up, so I had to teach in a more technical than creative way.

Because of the heat, the classes with the children never started before 4:00 p.m. During the mid-day period (noon to four o'clock), the usual temperature was between 100 and 110 degrees, and everything closed down. Under duress, I would sometimes do one of my solo rehearsals—and sweat like a pig after the first *demi-plié*. I had to drink a lot of water; they had very good water in Limassol—a very important thing in touring. (When I toured China in 1983, I couldn't drink the water because I would get sick, so I had to drink beer!)

WORKING TO pull *Running Towards the Light* together for the International Arts Festival was truly an adventure. I had had the music professionally taped before I left Canada, and I brought, in my head, a costume design that I'd worked out with an Edmonton designer. But getting the costumes built and dyed, and the organizational process involved in staging the work were absolutely devastating at points.

I had one of my most amazing adventures in artistic collaboration with *the* designer on the island. Her name is Lula Shoemith, and she's 83 years old, with *flaming* red hair and a cigarette hanging out of the corner of her mouth. She's about three-and-a-half feet tall and wears four-inch heels—and has more energy than 10 people in their '20s and '30s put together. She's one of the most fantastic characters I've ever met, and the experience of working with her was memorable.

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Working with the lighting designer on *Running Towards the Light* was almost impossible—the same with the sound man. Their attitude was that they were *the* professionals on Cyprus. They *did* have the only equipment on the island and they worked very hard, but they never wrote down one cue! And I found this to be a nearly impossible way to work.

But the piece *did* come together. And many of the members of the Dance Workshop thought it was very successful. They reported that I'd gotten them emotionally involved—that it was the first time they had ever performed anything with a story and emotional content.

THE INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL opened on June 27. It was a gala event, with about 2,000 people in the audience. The President of Cyprus and the Mayor of Limassol attended.

There were companies from the People's Republic of China, Russia, England and many parts of Europe—and me, representing Canada. I was billed, in Greek and English, as “a famous Canadian ballerina”.

I danced excerpts from my solo concert *The Beast Under the Bed*, as well as some works choreographed by Lambros Lambrou, the Alberta Ballet Company's resident choreographer. My solos were interspersed throughout the program, and after my first shock at having to hold the stage after a group of 40 had left it—and finding that I could *survive* that!—I really started to enjoy the performances.

At the conclusion of the Festival, the heads of the Chinese folk-dance company, Lambros and I were received by the Mayor of Limassol. We were given a plaque and personal thanks for participating in the Festival.

Through their interpreter, I found out that the Chinese company was from Beijing. The woman remembered when I was there in 1983 with other Alberta artists. That was quite a thrill!

AFTER THE International Arts Festival ended, I performed as a guest artist for the 20th anniversary of Nadia Nicolaides' Academy of Ballet. The sold-out performance was a fantastic success.

Someday I will choreograph a dance about what it was like to be behind the scenes at this event. While the audience saw a well-polished, well-disciplined performance, backstage it was total madness organizing the 200 children. I just stayed quietly in a corner until it was time for me to dance.

I performed *Arctic* and *Zeymbekigo*, which has been loved whenever I have danced it. To the Greek-Cypriots, however, it was somewhat controversial. The music, traditionally, is danced to only by men, and Lambros choreographed it for a woman—so it created some arguments. Nonetheless, the choreographer makes an important statement in *Zeymbekigo*, and it is a beautiful dance.

I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER my six weeks on the island. The personal highlight of my time there was, I think, the days Helen Stylianou, a photographer and journalist for one of the local Cyprus newspapers, and I went out into the countryside.

One morning we rose very early and drove to a place known as Aphrodite's Rock, a good half-hour out of Limassol. We also went to the ancient theatre at Cirium and the Temple of Apollo.

And I just danced. No audience, no staging—just pleasure and personal harmony. Just the wind, the sea and me. •

In Review: Performances

Vancouver

Reviewed by Susan Inman

IF THE DANCE BOOM IS OVER, Vancouver hasn't heard about it. Autumn showed many of the locally based companies to be pushing at their boundaries, and winter brought an even greater number of Christmas offerings than last year.

THE GOH BALLET, IN A SOLD-OUT evening at the Queen Elizabeth Playhouse, demonstrated its phenomenal progress in becoming an important modern ballet company. That progress is, unfortunately, uneven—as was all too evident in the opening work, *Love is in the Air*, choreographed by Lynn Seymour. This jazzy piece, set to a range of snappy tunes by the Inkspots, looked like a misguided emulation of rock videos. The deliciously flavoured music only made the dancers' blandness more striking. They looked young and amateurish. Instead of providing the sharp, dramatic punctuations needed, the dancers were tentative and unfocused, even revealing their studious preparations for turns.

But all that balletic preparation—so much an obstacle in enlivening Seymour's piece—came to healthy fruition in the premiere of Choo San Goh's *Ballade*. In this work, specially choreographed for them, the dancers presented a flawless vision of endlessly flowing movement, set to a lush score by Fauré. The clarity and competence apparent here also emerged in the rest of the program.

The pas de deux from *Don Quixote* highlighted the remarkable quick lightness and precision of Chan Hon Goh, who last year triumphed at the Lausanne International Competition. She was ably partnered by Wei Dong Sheng, who—along with Li Ya Ming, a stunningly sinuous apparition in *Le Spectre de la Rose*—is contributing to the unusually strong male presence in the company.

STRETCHING ITS BOUNDARIES in a different way was Judith Marcuse's Repertory Dance Company of Canada. Besides displaying the constantly evolving choreography of Marcuse herself, the program showed works by three other choreographers. *Big Shoulders*, Lar Lubovitch's fascinating tribute to bustling Chicago, has dancers continuously reassembling themselves to a soundscape of construction noises. Danny Grossman's *Triptych* forces us to witness the tormented plights of three derelicts and confront their raw human vulnerability. Ginette Laurin's *And the Angels Sing* is an elegantly cool send-up of romance, with lots of surprises.

Marcuse's work also offered a rich variety. *Cortege*, her newest piece, appears as a quietly shimmering study of the intersection between the human and the divine. *Closed Circuit*, a dimly lit work with five dancers in black tights and shorts, convincingly builds its images of anger and alienation with incessant desperation.

Time Out, besides being an uplifting crowd-pleaser, should be included in any account of successful attempts by Cana-



David Cooper

Members of Repertory Dance Company of Canada in *Time Out*, choreographed by artistic director Judith Marcuse.

dians to depict themselves. Here, several everyday people, appearing in the ubiquitous winter paraphernalia of lumbermen's jackets, Cowichan sweaters, wool ponchos, etc., lie huddled on the floor. Gradually forcing themselves into heavy, plodding walks, they seem resigned to the elements.

As the air is filled with the sparkling sounds of Senegalese music, their trudging is suddenly transformed. Shedding their drabness to reveal a colourful, rag-tag collection of festive garb, they burst into spirited, joyful motion.

Marcuse has managed to teach her dancers that same paradoxical quality of crisp looseness of which she is such a stunning master. She also finds ways to incorporate individual dancers' unique movement gifts—Joe Laughlin's acrobatic fluidity is allowed full rein as he dazzlingly propels himself onto and off the floor.

Though the fantasy ends with the inevitable return to winter doldrums, one romantic couple, playfully jiving, keeps the spark alive on the fringes of the frosty space.

WHILE MARCUSE'S COMPANY gave us the pleasure of viewing mature choreographic visions presented on fully developed dancers, Simon Fraser University's annual faculty

concert required that we understand the limitations of student dancers. Fortunately, the faculty managed to work surprisingly well within those limits, while still challenging the students' technical and performance skills.

Works ranged from the carefully crafted abstract studies of individual/group relationships offered by Grant Strate and Iris Garland to the spiritual sensuousness of Monique Giard's imaginative *Drops of Love*.

The tackling of social commentary was handled extremely differently by Maureen McKellar in *Una Voce* and Santa Aloi in *Soap Opera*. McKellar's work, inspired by both the Vancouver Peace March and her studies of Laban movement theory, traces the development of a large group of isolated dancers with diverse travelling movements into a harmonious, interconnected unit. Based on a simple, yet effective movement vocabulary, the work radiates a straightforward integrity.

Aloi's work, however, appeared muddled. As bombastic opera music sweeps the stage, eight "housewives" clad in frowzy dresses alternate between bouts of pathetic romantic yearning and gripes about their exaggeratedly aching bodies. (It's odd that a piece that makes women look so ridiculous was performed on a campus that contains one of the most developed women's studies programs in the country.)

AMONG THE CHRISTMAS SHOWS this year was *Cinderella*, a lavish, highly engaging production. The splendours of Karen Kain were boldly announced in its promotional material. It was a shock, then, when the less-than-stupendous chorus had more dance sequences than Kain herself. Though she managed to infuse even the tiniest gestures given her with startling eloquence, the ample opportunities in the plotline which could have incorporated any real dance statement by her were ignored.

Pacific Northwest Ballet appeared again this season, performing its psychologically rich and provocative version of *The Nutcracker*. The brilliantly conceived sets and costumes by Maurice Sendak, as well as his collaboration in the whole production, have resulted in an admirably unique rethinking of this favourite tale.

A successful reworking of the childhood favourite *Peter Pan* was achieved in *Neverland*, which signalled a promising collaboration between Tamahnous Theatre and EDAM. Susan McKenzie and Jennifer Mascal demonstrated substantial ability to integrate acting with dance. It is to be hoped that this is a collaboration that will continue and draw the attention of the rest of the dance community towards to a genre that has not been well explored here.

Winnipeg

Reviewed by Jacqui Good

IN PAST SEASONS it has been possible to talk about the blurring of distinctions between classical ballet and modern dance in Winnipeg. Of the city's two principal companies, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet has built its reputation on modern ballets that draw much of their energy from the world of the barefoot modern dancer, while Contemporary Dancers (once known as Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers) has, for most of its 22-year-history, embraced an eclectic repertoire and a variety of dance styles. Dancers have even moved from one company to the other.

But of late the twain have not been meeting. And last fall



dance programming underlined the very different directions the two companies have chosen.

Subscribers to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet were promised a season of "story" ballets—a succession of venerable chestnuts like *Romeo and Juliet* and *Swan Lake*—along with the revival, for Christmas, of *The Big Top*, a perky and relatively recent addition to the repertoire.

At Contemporary Dancers, subscribers were offered "dance-theatre". Like the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's "story" ballets, these works do have a dramatic element, a narrative to tell; but these new dances are worlds apart from ballet's story-book conservatism. They mix dance and theatre, movement and the spoken word, politics and passion in a way much more familiar to European audiences than to those in Winnipeg. Contemporary Dancers is creating an exciting new personality for itself.

"NEW" IS HARDLY AN ADJECTIVE I can apply to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's choices this season. The closest thing the opening program provided was a complete performance of Brian Macdonald's *Steps*, a portion of which received its premiere last season. The entire work was first performed last summer at Expo 86 in Vancouver.

Macdonald was the company's first resident choreographer, so bringing him back for *Steps* had a nice sense of completion. Just as his *Ballet High* reflected its time, the early 1970s, with the rock music of Lighthouse, *Steps* holds a mirror up to the 1980s, using a punk group—or perhaps satanic, heavy-metal is a more apt description—in its final "Rock" movement. But while the '70s ballet left us feeling, well, *high* about life and its possibilities, *Steps* is rather more sombre.

The middle section of the ballet, set to music by Handel, is lovely—courtly and vaguely medieval. There—and then—Macdonald sees a connectedness in daily life and a genuine joy in human contact.

The first section, however, uses music by R. Murray Schafer that is both chant-like and barbaric. The impression given by the versatile set is something like a cave, while the



Photographs by David Cooper

Scenes from *Steps*, Brian Macdonald's most recent work for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. (Inset) Evelyn Hart, Patti Caplette and Elizabeth Olds in the second section ("Handel"). (Above) Members of the company in the final section ("Rock").

costumes suggest ancient Egypt or Sumeria. The movements are ritualistic and ordered, but with a touch of menace.

Those movements, oddly enough, are echoed in the final section of *Steps*. The music of Skinny Puppy is an unalloyed cry of anguish. There is a new barbarism afoot, it seems—but without even that earlier sense of order. The contact between people is quick and feverish. Nothing lasts. Our steps forward in evolution, Macdonald tells us, have led us back to despair.

Steps may be a flawed work, but it is by far the most exhilarating and ambitious offered this season by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

For the rest, we could glimpse Evelyn Hart at the top of her form in the *Tschaikovsky Pas de deux*, George Balanchine's delightful essay on the classical form. Hart, partnered by Stephen Hyde, was quick and clean and neat with her footwork, long and lyrical with her arms.

Sadly, even these minor pleasures were undercut by the company's ill-advised decision to bring the Vicente Nebraska version of *Firebird* out of mothballs. Despite the brilliant Stravinsky score, this is a dopey dance. Nebraska fails to provide the spectacular dancing that would match the high-flying music. There is a curious wooden quality to the entire proceeding, a lack of passion.

All the excitement comes from gimmicks—everything from glitter dust to an exploding egg. The *Firebird* is hoisted up, à la Peter Pan, on a wire to fly offstage. (I must confess that the three-headed "lizard things" appealed to me, but surely I shouldn't have watched them instead of the pas de deux at centre stage.)

This *Firebird* uses a Stravinsky score for a Las Vegas floor show directed by Walt Disney. It's not a ballet.

CONTEMPORARY DANCERS OPENED *Camping Out*, *A Wilde Night with Liszt* on New Year's Eve. It is not a ballet either. And it sports its fair share of glitter dust and fantastical costumes, as well. But there the resemblance ends.

This is a new-wave, post-modern piece of dance-theatre. But the music, ironically, is by Franz Liszt—the ultimate Romantic.

In the opening sequence, we see a room full of concert-goers listening to him play. Men in velvet suits and women in Aubrey Beardsley get-ups recoil as each wave of music, each chord, hits them. They literally fall out of their seats.

We are attending a decadent soiree hosted by a strange baronial fellow of ambiguous sexuality. Murray Darroch, co-choreographer—with Tedd Robinson and Rachel Browne—of the piece, is wonderfully witty in this theatrical role. He defines "camp" sensibility for us ("Camp is a disguise that fails") and leads us through the main course, the dessert and the coffee . . . as well as the disintegration of civilization.

While the acting and the situations are campy and even funny, the dancing is a serious business. Liszt's music is almost pure emotion and particularly suits Robinson's choreographic style, tending as it does to jerky frenzy.

In *Nothing Past the Swans*, an earlier dance-drama experiment, Robinson and company seemed to lose sight of dance in the collaborative mix. This time around, the narrative, the music and the costumes are all important—but they never overshadow the movement. In fact, *Camping Out* offers some of the most distinctive and idiosyncratic dance produced by Contemporary Dancers in quite some time.

Robinson, Browne and Darroch are the choreographers of *Camping Out*, but they are not the company's only dance-makers. A workshop evening called *Chinese Whispers*, presented earlier in the season, showcased innovative works by just about every member of the troupe. Under Tedd Robinson's artistic direction, this company has become more and more a collective of independent choreographers.

AS A RESULT, the independent dance scene is flourishing both inside and outside Contemporary Dancers. This season we've seen former company member Cathy Corns present an evening of her works, a showcase from Dance Manitoba and the foundation of a new ensemble called Dance Theatre.

And all of this activity is a welcome breath of fresh air after the stultifying silliness of something like *Firebird*.

Ottawa

Reviewed by Christine Pappas

IN OCTOBER, OTTAWA WAS TREATED to a glimpse of the elusive Theatre Ballet of Canada in a preview showing of its fall repertoire before the company headed off on a tour of Western Canada and the United States. The company presented a mixed program of five works, two of which were premieres by guest choreographers.

The evening opened with *Collage Animé*, a bright, upbeat piece created specially for Theatre Ballet's fall season by guest choreographer David Allan of the National Ballet of Canada. This piece contains some interesting and energetic *divertissements* and gave a very good indication of how fresh and vital the company looks at this point.

Perhaps the most interesting piece of the evening was *Liberated*, created for Theatre Ballet by guest choreographer Lynne Taylor-Corbett. The work is a satirical and humorous look at

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the many roles of women in a man's life—classic sexual stereotyping of the mother-figure, the tease and, finally, the virgin bride. It is notable, in addition to the choreography, for the creative concept and musical collage, which features music by The Nylons and Vangelis, and text by Helen Gurley Brown.

I'm not convinced, however, that this is the type of choreography best suited to a classical company. Theatre Ballet should stick to what it does best, and that is *dance*, not theatre—although the piece itself was engaging and delightful to watch.

Ottawa dance fans who had attended *Dance! An Ottawa Summer Festival* last year were treated to a repeat performance of *A Toast*, by Lawrence Gradus, artistic director of Theatre Ballet. This upbeat vaudevillean piece, set to music by Leonard Bernstein, was carried off with the same panache and freshness with which it was performed last summer.

Taylor-Corbett's *Full Moon*, danced by Sophie Corriveau and newcomer Johnny Rougeolle, was reminiscent of a 1940s werewolf movie. It has the mood of James Kudelka's *Dracula*, aided by effectively threatening lighting by Ron Snippe.

Corriveau is truly a delight to watch. Although she is not taller than her fellow dancers, she *seems* to stretch head and shoulders above them. In *arabesque*, her back seems that much longer. Her well-stretched leg and pointed foot set her apart, technically, from the rest of the company.

Tribute, one of Lawrence Gradus' signature pieces on Theatre Ballet, was the final piece of the evening. It showed off the company to its best advantage, displaying its strength as a unit and the technical competence of all its dancers. It is, indeed, a "tribute" to the purely classical dance form, and Theatre Ballet should retain this piece in its repertoire.

Gradus has found a combination of dancers who suit his choreography, his use of space, stage and technique. The partnering is effective, each dancer has individuality, yet the company best shows its strength in ensemble.

ANNE TERESA DE KEERSMAEKER and her company Rosas presented *Rosas Danst Rosas* at the Ottawa International Dance Festival last season. In November the Belgian company returned to the National Arts Centre with *Bartók Aantekeningen*, de Keersmaeker's newest work, created in Europe last May. The differences in the two works are astonishing. If *Rosas Danst Rosas* was the seed, *Bartók Aantekeningen* is truly the harvest.

The choreography is no less stark—perhaps is even more so—guided by repetitious, minimalist movement, often bleak, but with a new complexity and certainly more vitality. That, coupled with the precise and very disciplined movement of the dancers, has made Rosas a more absorbing and certainly more visually stimulating company.

A year seems to have done much for de Keersmaeker, as though her success throughout Europe and, more recently, North America has given her the confidence to expand on the parameters so rigidly set in *Rosas Danst Rosas*.

Bartók Aantekeningen is set principally to Béla Bartók's *String Quartet No. 4*. Against harmonizing and conflicting backdrops—amateur black-and-white films of peaceful farm-life juxtaposed with the violent nature of the city—four dancers (de Keersmaeker, Fumiyo Ikeda, Nadine Ganase and Roxane Huilmand) explore the transition from childhood to womanhood. Awkwardness, frustration and humour are intertwined with moments of extreme sophistication.

De Keersmaeker can create a devastating effect using noth-

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- They help us create the stars, the legends we need. Canadian magazines foster our own sense of ourselves.
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The threat to your magazine

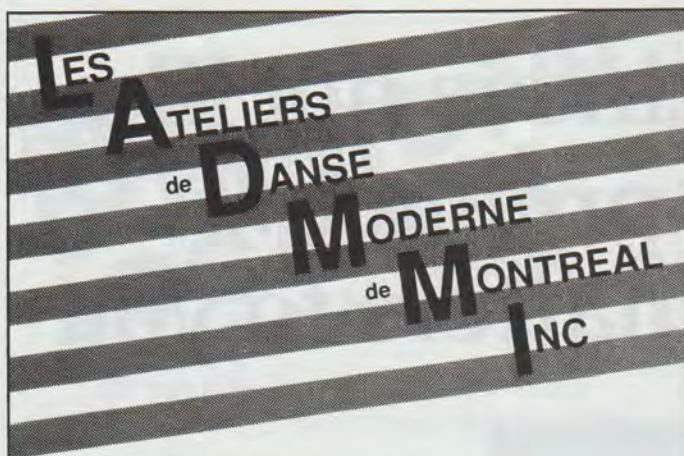
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ing at all. A lengthy silence at the beginning of the performance created a mood of tension and anticipation in the audience. The dancers were poised, mannequin-like, already onstage, as the audience trickled in to take their seats. The usual noises of programs rustling and coats being tucked away were strangely absent.

With no fancy costumes, props or gimmicks, de Keersmaecker's approach is uncompromising, severe. This austerity can, however, create problems for the viewer. There were periods when the movement seemed aimless and detached, and one wondered, at times, where the piece was going. (Aside from the fact that an hour and three-quarters without intermission can push any audience to its limits!) But mostly de Keersmaecker and her dancers succeeded in capturing and holding the attention of the audience with their meticulous precision and synchronicity.

A GROAN OF DISAPPOINTMENT swept through the audience at the National Arts Centre when it was announced that Mark Morris would not be dancing with his company, the Mark Morris Dance Group, that evening. Silence followed when it was also announced that he would be replaced by a female company member. But, as it turned out, the absence from the stage of this 28-year-old, much-hailed choreographer from Seattle served to let the audience concentrate not on the man, but on his choreography.

The substitution of a female dancer made it clear from the start that there is absolutely no delineation of male/female roles in the company. Any substitutions, in any of the three pieces presented that evening, could have been made with no effect on the movement or the choreography.

Before forming his own company in 1980, Morris danced with Lar Lubovitch, Eliot Feld, Hannah Kahn, Laura Dean and Twyla Tharp. While comparisons are inevitable, the program Morris presented in Ottawa left little doubt that he has a style all his own.

Morris' choreography is very mainstream North America. There is no need to ask the forbidden question, "What's it all supposed to mean?" His language is unpretentious, and he has used the past to develop his own distinct and unique style.

The November engagement in Ottawa was the Mark Morris Dance Group's Canadian premiere—and its only stop in Canada.

The three pieces presented at the National Arts Centre served to show Morris' extensive range as a choreographer. The evening opened with *Marble Halls*, set to Bach's *Concerto in C Minor for Two Harpsichords*, which gave the audience a positive first taste of this extroverted and high-energy company. Ten dancers wearing white undershirts and baggy orange shorts race across the stage at breakneck speed, narrowly missing each other, ending the movement with wide, arm-swirling circles. The dancers return to the centre of the stage, forming diagonal lines, and the movement takes on a translucent quality: the lines *dissolve* rather than break up.

In the midst of this activity, one becomes keenly aware of the classical training of the dancers. Among the unique variations on *jeté* and *fondue*, Morris' choreography for the arms is particularly effective—fifth *en haut* seems to be a favourite. This company makes you sit up and take notice of every movement.

Morris' sense of humour surfaced in an outrageous parody, *Pièces en concert*, set to Couperin's *Concert Pieces for Cello and Strings*. The work is reminiscent of the—now infamous—

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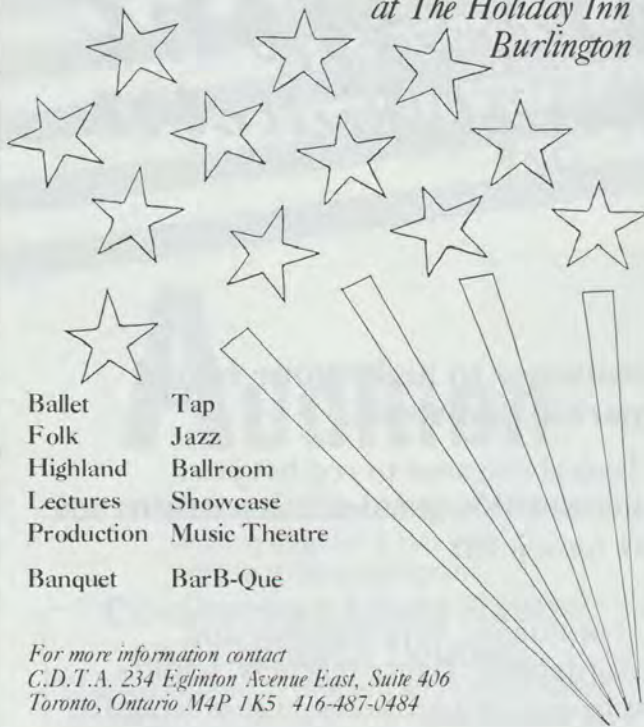
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19th-century *Pas de quatre*. In this case, however, it is a *pas de trois*, with two dancers clad in male attire (one being Tina Fehlandt, replacing Morris) and one *grande dame*, swathed in diamonds—all fighting for the limelight and centre stage.

The choreographer goes one step further—he takes pot shots at some of the more self-indulgent avant-garde companies, as well. There are plenty of glazed looks, heavily weighted bodies, and feet and hands slapping the floor.

The final work of the evening brought the audience sharply back into focus. *Stabat Mater*, with music by Pergolesi, is Morris' newest work, commissioned in 1986 for the Brooklyn Academy of Music's prestigious Next Wave Festival.

It travelled to the opposite extreme from the earlier pieces on the program. In *Stabat Mater* we saw an intensely serious choreographer, with a strong flair for the dramatic, and a work filled with religious overtones—Morris and his company actually acknowledge God in the program notes.

Three groups of four dancers take turns in front of a giant cross projected against the backdrop. One gets flashbacks to *Jesus Christ Superstar* and the wailing masses in front of Christ on the cross. The dancers alternate between slow, almost lamenting swoons and frantic, sharp turns and wide arm circles, culminating in dramatic falls to the floor.

One left the theatre knowing there is much more to Mark Morris than could be seen in an evening. Although we saw the extensive choreographic range of which he is capable and his response to scores by Bach, Couperin and Pergolesi, by no means did we see the full extent of his musical tastes.

There is much more to Mark Morris and his company—we have been given only a tantalizing taste, and that leaves audiences wanting more. I strongly suspect Ottawa audiences will be seeing the Mark Morris Dance Group—and, with luck, Morris himself—again in the not-too-distant future.

Toronto

Reviewed by Paula Citron

ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL of dance in Toronto toward the end of the year, premieres of two full-length works dominated the events. At the O'Keefe Centre, the National Ballet of Canada unveiled its new production of Ronald Hynd's *The Merry Widow*, and Premiere Dance Theatre hosted Robert Desrosiers' latest opus, entitled *Lumière*, set on Desrosiers Dance Theatre. Both works attracted a great deal of hype and large audiences.

IN THE OPENING MOMENTS of *Lumière*, dancer David Wood is finishing dinner at a restaurant and asks the waiter if he should go to the opera or the cinema. This question is the point of departure for Robert Desrosiers' in-depth look at art and the artist, and both opera and film are woven throughout the production.

Desrosiers, with his concept of dance-theatre, has now become such a cult figure that he can do no wrong in the eyes of his followers. For his part, he feeds off this adoration by supplying his insatiable audiences with more "bread and circuses". Thus, *Lumière* has more dazzling effects, more complications in the set, more bizarre costumes, more innovative use of music and other media (in this case, film). It is truly a feast for the senses, and audiences duly gave Desrosiers—and his imagination—standing ovations.

For people interested only in the superficial, Desrosiers is a magician, a spell-binder, a man who can weave fantasies on



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the stage like no other. During the intermission of *Lumière*, however, I heard—interspersed with the rapturous comments—grumbings that the choreographer had over-stepped intelligibility in his drive toward grandiosity. To be frank, I felt the same. The first half of *Lumière* bombarded me with a parade of images—including the collapse of a temple and the re-creation of Venice, replete with gondola—but I was curiously dissatisfied and irritated. Where was it all leading?

Some people are content to stay on the surface with Desrosiers' work and be passive. On this highly imaginative, visual level, a throughline is not necessary. I, on the other hand, give Desrosiers credit for being more than merely a genius at stagecraft. The man is a philosopher who uses his dance-theatre to make statements, no matter how obscure; and it is important to struggle through his visionary obstacle course to lock into what he is saying.

The key to Desrosiers' work is his use of recurring symbols. Every image contains clues to the overall super-objective; and once a pattern is established for the viewer, the choreographer's vision takes on a larger meaning. This use of symbols is further deepened by some images becoming points of departure triggering off new meanings. Thus, a fire in the cinema that sends patrons screaming into the street is transformed into a parade of torches and a solo dance for a figure in white denoting man's inspiration. A bird, shown in a film clip being released from a cage, suddenly appears onstage, as do other characters from the story, and an ensemble dance section occurs.

In *Lumière* I believe that Desrosiers is talking about the nature of art and the place of the artist within it. On a simple level, *lumière*—light—can be the lights on a stage set, the lights around a make-up mirror, the lights that are part of a movie projector—all of which appear in the work. But *Lumière* is also about freedom of creation and the acceptance of one's vision by the public. For me, the most poignant moment in the work is a solo Desrosiers performed himself. He leaves an onstage dressing-room and, once by himself, produces an eloquent paean to the plight of an artist—his joys, his fears, his insecurities.

Lumière is a visual masterpiece, and Desrosiers has surrounded himself with a strong company of performers, musicians, stagecraft experts and film-makers.

One nagging thought remains, however. Is it important to Desrosiers that the audience at large understands the *raison d'être* for his work? As each opus becomes increasingly complicated, the choreographer further distances the audience from his inner meaning. Will Desrosiers eventually bury truth entirely with his stage vision?—that is the question!

THE NATIONAL BALLET OF CANADA doesn't have to worry about heavy symbolism in its production of *The Merry Widow*. The work was originally choreographed for the Australian Ballet by Ronald Hynd and is based on a scenario by Robert Helpmann. John Lanchbery has cleverly arranged music from the operetta by Franz Lehár into a ballet score, and all the well-loved tunes are there. When Desmond Heeley's stupendous, sumptuous sets and costumes are added to the total package, one would have to be a curmudgeon not to enjoy the work.

Nonetheless, stripped of its aural and visual splendour, the choreography is rather insipid; Hynd is not a Cranko or an Ashton when it comes to story-telling.

And good dancing is not enough to breathe life into *The Merry Widow*. When danced by craftsmen, the work becomes

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routine; but when it is performed by artists who can act, Hynd's choreography is given substance.

As proof of the richness in the ranks, the company presented five Widows—Karen Kain, Sabina Allemann, Veronica Tennant, Gizella Witkowsky and Karyn Tessmer; four Danilos—guest artist John Meehan (who created the role in Australia), Gregory Osborne, Tomas Schramek and Rex Harrington; five Valenciennes—Yoko Ichino, Kim Light-



David Street

Tomas Schramek as Danilo in the National Ballet of Canada's production of *The Merry Widow*.

heart, guest artist Evelyn Hart, Kimberly Glasco and Cynthia Lucas; and four Camilles—Kevin Pugh, Owen Montague, Raymond Smith and Anthony Randazzo. Needless to say, some brought more to the roles than others.

Although I did not see the Kain/Meehan or Ichino/Pugh performances, I did catch all the other combinations of casts. Because of the diversity of acting ability, it was like seeing a new ballet each time, and the combinations that worked were the ones that conveyed sincerity and emotion. For example, Smith and Hart together sizzled onstage, while Smith and Lucas did nothing for me. Schramek and Tennant were moving as the reconciled lovers, Schramek and Tessmer less so.

Witkowsky, Tennant and Lighthouse proved that the ballet works better with dramatic ballerinas. A rejuvenated Schramek brought the most maturity to Danilo, although Osborne and Harrington could each, in time, make the role his own. However, Allemann, Glasco and Montague failed to come to grips with their roles and brought little to the stage except movement. And, for *The Merry Widow*, movement is not enough! •

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

The **Kirov Ballet** will tour North America again this spring, with performances scheduled in Toronto (May 20-24), Chicago (May 27-31), Montreal (June 1-3), Quebec City (June 4-5), Ottawa (June 6-7) and Vancouver (June 9-13).

Vancouver-born dancer and choreographer **Reid Anderson** has been named co-artistic director, with Annette av Paul, of **Ballet British Columbia**. He had previously worked with the company as a guest choreographer, teacher and producer.

Anna Wyman Dance Theatre performed in New Delhi, India, as part of Canada Week festivities in February. The company presented four of Wyman's works: *Adastra*, *City Piece*, *Takada* and *Cadenza*.

Ballet British Columbia began its second season with performances at Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Theatre in February.

The program included the premiere of *Petite Sinfonie Concertante*, a work commissioned by Ballet British Columbia from David Allan, a member of the National Ballet of Canada; *Hangman's Reel*, by Brian Macdonald; and John Butler's *Medea*. As well, *Opus I*, choreographed by John Cranko, was staged for the company by Reid Anderson.

The **Goh Ballet Company** will present its end-of-season performance at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Vancouver, May 23.

The program is scheduled to include Choo San Goh's *Ballade*; *Sundances*, choreographed by Lambros Lambrou; and two new works—Josette Leboucher's *Symphonie Classique* and *Cantata*, choreographed for the Company by David Earle.

Anna Wyman Dance Theatre will present three world premieres during its performances at the Vancouver Playhouse, April 30-May 2.

The new works will be choreographed by Wyman herself and, in a break from company tradition, two guest choreographers—Reid Anderson, co-artistic director of Ballet British Columbia, and Tsurumo Ben Iida, director of Switzerland's Tanztheatre.

"Producing works by other artists is a total departure for us," comments Wyman, "but in breaking new ground, we are lighting new creative fires."

The **Goh Ballet Company** will tour the Far East in June. Performances are sche-

duled in four cities in China—Beijing, Nan-chang, Shanghai and Guangzhou—as well as in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong.

Maria Formolo spent the winter months on tour, giving workshops and performing her solo work *The Beast Under the Bed*, featuring choreography by Lambros Lambrou, Petre Bodeutz, Denise Clarke and Ohad Naharin.

She appeared in Halifax, New York (where she performed at the Riverside Dance Festival), Quebec City, Ottawa, Regina, Vancouver and Edmonton.

Calgary-based **Sun-Ergos** presented a new production, *The Legend of Jumping Mouse*, in February. The show, which deals with the Plains Indian heritage of Canada, was a collaborative effort with Calgary painter Valerie Robertson and High River writer Frances Fraser.

The company's last show of the season, *Just Dance*, a solo performance by Dana Luebke, will be presented April 23-May 3.

Alberta Dance Explosion, a series of programs presented by Dancers' Studiowest at the Studio Theatre in Calgary, featured the work of Lisa Doolittle, Monique de Ruij, Memi von Gaza, Brian Webb and Shelly Tognazzinni (Feb. 5-7); Donna Krasnow, Bonnie McLean, Lucinda Neufeld, Kathryn MacGregor and Linda Evan Wong (Feb. 19-21); and Barbara Bonner, Denise Clarke, Anne Flynn, Mile Zero Dance and Frank Panych (Mar. 26-28).

Performances by the **Calgary City Ballet** at the Jubilee Auditorium in February featured guest artists, including Galina Panova, from the Royal Ballet of Flanders in the Canadian premiere of Valery Panov's *Rite of Spring*. The program also included new works by Denise Clarke of the University of Calgary and Lambros Lambrou, resident choreographer of the Alberta Ballet.

Orchesis, the University of Alberta's creative dance group, presented its annual show in February. *Dance Motif '87* featured the choreography of local modern and jazz dancers, and the dancing of University students and alumni.

The program included Suzanne Gove's *Relentless Rhythm*; *Penance and Shoes Never Lie*, by Frank Panych of Alberta Dance Theatre; Jackie Ogg and her students in an improvisational piece; and Lindy Sisson's *Head Set*.



V. Tony Hauser

Behind the scenes at a photo-call: a relaxed moment for Celia Franca, Linda Maybarduk, president of the Dance in Canada Association, and Steve Dymond, the Association's executive director.

Two guest groups were also scheduled to appear: Mile Zero Dance in *Fast Forward . . . Play . . . Pause*, choreographed by Debra Shantz, and members of the Alberta Children's Creative Dance Theatre in *Contrasts*, choreographed by Anne Kipling Brown.

Umran Sumen has been named artistic director of the **Calgary City Ballet**, replacing Laszlo Tamasik. A former soloist with the National Ballet of Turkey, she first joined the Calgary company in 1985 as ballet mistress.

Petre Bodeutz was the recipient of the **Dance Saskatchewan** Dance Celebrity of the Year Award in January. Past recipients include Lusya Pavlychenko, Doris Sitter and Marianne Livant.

Evelyn Hart, principal dancer with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, danced in the Soviet Union in March. In her first performance, she danced the title role in *Giselle* with the Odessa State Ballet Company.

At a gala performance in Moscow, she was partnered by members of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet—John Kaminski in *Le Jazz*

Hot and André Lewis in *Nuages*—and danced a pas de deux with Andris Liepa of the Bolshoi Ballet

Her trip was filmed by Northern Cross Productions Inc. of Winnipeg, and the result, an hour-long documentary, will be seen on CBC television in May 1987.

Winnipeg's **Andalucia Dancers**, directed by Carmen de Torres, will present a flamenco concert, with guest appearances by Spain's Joaquin Rey and Niño Elias, at the Tech Voc School Theatre, April 25.

Contemporary Dancers will present the **Third Festival of Canadian Modern**

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Among those scheduled to perform are Contemporary Dancers, Montréal Danse, Danny Grossman Dance Company, Susan McKenzie, Randy Glynn Dance Project, Phyllis Whyte, Montanaro Dance and Desrosiers Dance Theatre.

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet has announced repertoire for its 1987-88 Winnipeg season. The company will present three premieres: *Adagio Hammerklavier*, choreographed by Hans van Manen; Leonide Massine's *Gaieté Parisienne*; and *Wingborne*, a pas

de deux by Lloyce Houlton.

Also scheduled are *The Nutcracker* (choreographed by John Neumeier), *Giselle* (Peter Wright), *Pulcinella Variations* (Michael Smuin), a revival of *Ballet Premiere* (Arnold Spohr) and the "subscribers' choice" ballet—to be chosen from the results of a Winnipeg season subscriber survey.

The season will also feature a guest company: the National Ballet of Canada, performing its new production of *The Merry Widow*.

Changes at **Harbourfront** in Toronto: **William J.S. Boyle** is now director of public programming. Prior to this appointment, he was director of the Art Gallery and manager of visual arts at Harbourfront. His new responsibilities include the wide range of cultural activities and public events throughout the vast 100-acre site in the areas of performing arts, visual arts, education/recreation and marine programs.

Cecil O'Neal has been named manager of performing arts. He assumes responsibility for guiding future Harbourfront programming in dance, music, theatre and film.

The National Tap Dance Company of Canada performed in China in January. The tour was part of an official cultural exchange between the provinces of Ontario, Canada, and Jiangsu, China.

In February the Company made its debut in Washington, D.C., performing at Constitution Hall with the United States Air Force Symphony.

At the end of March members of the Company began a two-week tour of Eastern Canada, with performances in Quebec (Lennoxville, Mar. 30-31), Nova Scotia (Woodstock, Apr. 2; Halifax, Apr. 3-4) and Newfoundland (Labrador City, Apr. 6; Corner Brook, Apr. 7 and 9; Stephenville, Apr. 8; Grand Falls, Apr. 10; Gander, Apr. 11; and St. John's, Apr. 12-13).

Toronto Dance Theatre performed throughout the Maritimes and Quebec during January and February. Repertoire for the tour included works by Peter Randazzo (*Enter the Dawn*), Patricia Beatty (*Skyling, Radical Light*), David Earle (*Sacra Conversazione, Sunrise*) and Christopher House (*Animated Shorts, Glass Houses, Schubert Dances and green evening, clear and warm*).

On the company's first tour of Mexico and Venezuela (March 21-April 2), the program featured *Glass Houses, Schubert Dances, Animated Shorts, Sacra Conversazione* and *Radical Light*.

Vanessa Harwood gave her final performance with the National Ballet of Canada on February 15 at the O'Keefe Centre in Toronto. Partnered by Gregory Osborne, she danced the role of Swanilda in Erik Bruhn's production of *Coppélia*.

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Judy Jarvis

Dancer-choreographer Judy Jarvis died last November in Toronto. She was 44 years old. A graduate of the University of Toronto, she studied dance with, among others, the legendary Mary Wigman.

Jarvis began to perform as a solo artist in 1967. Subsequently she formed and

(and a principal dancer since 1970), she plans to continue her career in dance, performing as a guest artist and pursuing other interests in teaching, staging and acting.

Desrosiers Dance Theatre toured Australia this winter, performing at the Perth Festival and in Hobart, Tasmania, and in Adelaide. Repertoire for the four-week tour included *Brass Fountain*, *Mirrors* and *L'Hôtel Perdu*.

In March the company presented *Night Clown* at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto as part of a festival of children's events during the school holiday period.

Choreographer **Glen Tetley** has been named artistic associate of the **National Ballet of Canada**. He will consult with associate artistic directors Valerie Wilder and Lynn Wallis in many areas concerning the artistic management of the company, including repertoire selection, casting, scheduling and career development.

The **York University Department of Dance** presented *Spring Dance '87*, featuring modern choreography and performances by York alumni, faculty and students, at Toronto's Premiere Dance Theatre in March.

Among works scheduled for performance were Kerri Weir's *Grasping Forces*, Susan Cash's *Out of My Hands* (danced by Andrea Smith), Gail Benn's *The Last Word* (which she herself performed), Denise Duric's *The Verge*, Lisa Hopkin's *Skid*, Michelle Farwell's *Engravings* and Paula Ravitz's *Meridian*. York artist-in-residence Juan Antonio presented two works: *Tango d'octobre* and *Imago*.

Choreographer-dancer **Susan Cash** has a new dance ensemble, **Cash and Company Dance**. The group will make its debut at Danceworks' spring season at the Winchester Street Theatre in Toronto, March 4-7. Dancers Vicki Fagan, Phyllis Whyte, Louise Parent, Marie-Josée Chartier, Michael Conway and Jean-Aime Lalonde are scheduled to perform Cash's *Desperate Fantasies*, created in collaboration with composer Kirk Elliott.

The company will then travel to Ottawa (performing at the studios of Le Groupe de la Place Royale, April 24-25) and Vancouver (Firehall Theatre, May 14-16), where the

led a series of small dance companies.

In 1974 she received the Jean A. Chalmers Choreographic Award.

Jarvis taught dance at several Canadian universities, including Queen's and Waterloo. Among her students were Carol Anderson, Pamela Grundy and Gina Lori Riley.

More recently she taught secondary-school drama courses for the separate school board of North York.

program will include three of Cash's works—*Desperate Fantasies*, *Close Line Open* and *Familiar Footing*—and a new solo for Cash by Vancouver choreographer Lola McLaughlin.

Independent choreographer **Bengt Jörgen** presented a program of his work at Harbourfront's Studio Theatre in Toronto, March 6-8. The program included *Barest*, *Signature*, *Universal Rhythm*, *Sculpture and Motion*, *Guildford Cathedral: Dalliance of Eagles* and *Triad*.

The dancers were drawn from many areas of the Toronto dance community: Michael Trent (ConfiDance); Lorraine Blouin, Susan Burke, Nina Goldman, Julie Houle, Cynthia Macedo, Kim Lighthouse, Owen Montague, Daniel Nelson and Anthony Randazzo (National Ballet of Canada); Miriane Braaf, Suzanne Landerman and Coralee McLaren (School of Toronto Dance Theatre); and independent artists Suzanne Brown, Jean Lalonde, Jerry Prager and Peter Ottmann.

The **Danny Grossman Dance Company** appeared at Toronto's Premiere Dance Theatre, March 10-21.

Among the works performed were *La Valse* (a world premiere), *Magneto-Dynamo*, *Bella*, *Curious Schools of Theatrical Dancing: Part I*, *Nobody's Business*, the trio from *Ecce Homo (Behold the Man)*, *Higher* and *Ces Plaisirs*.

The Company will dance in New York, appearing at City College, April 7-12.

At the International Children's Festival, to be held at Harbourfront in Toronto, May 12-18, Grossman and Deborah Lundmark will collaborate on a new work, *Figurepainting*, using members of both the Danny Grossman Dance Company and the **Canadian Children's Dance Theatre**.

This spring the **National Ballet of Canada** completed a month-long tour of the United States, with performances in Minneapolis, Chicago, Miami, Clearwater, West Palm Beach and Washington, D.C.

Repertoire for the tour included *Alice*, *Serenade*, *Coppélia* and *The Merry Widow*.

T.I.D.E. (Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise) will present its spring program at the Winchester Street Theatre in Toronto, April 2-4.



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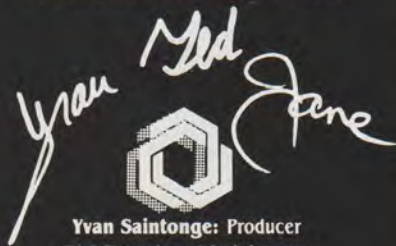
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Diana Jablokova-Vorps

Diana Jablokova-Vorps, founder and for many years director of the Toronto Regional Ballet Company, died in Toronto in January.

Born in Latvia, she received her dance training at the Riga Opera House Ballet School.

Following World War II, she emigrated to Canada, where she settled in Toronto.

She is survived by her husband, Carl D. Vorps, and two sons.

The program is scheduled to include Tama Soble's *From One House*, Darcey Callison's *Casting the First Stone* (a Toronto premiere), Denise Fujiwara's *Life Lines* and *Two Have and Two Hold*, choreographed by Paula Ravitz. Fujiwara will also perform Muna Tseng's *Egg*.

Anjali (Anne-Marie Gaston) will perform *Visions of the Feminine in Indian Classical Dance in Canada* (London, April 2-4; Hamilton, April 6-7; Vancouver, June 19-24), England (Oxford, May 2; Newcastle, May 29; Lancaster, July 8) and France (Paris, April 23).

Canadian Children's Dance Theatre presents *Playthings*, featuring dances by Peggy McCann, Murray Darroch, Lin Snelling and Deborah Lundmark, at the Winchester Street Theatre in Toronto, April 9-12.

Guest artist René Highway will appear in the premiere of a new work by Lundmark, *Light, Fire and Dark*.

The School of Toronto Dance Theatre will present its annual *Theatrum Sacrum* at the Winchester Street Theatre in Toronto, April 17-19. The program of sacred dances, choreographed by David Earle, will feature *Requiem* and several other works.

The professional training program's annual choreographic workshop will be held at the Winchester Street Theatre, May 13-16. As well as works choreographed by the students, the program will feature dances from the repertoire and Peter Randazzo's *Three-Sided Room*.

Promotions at the **National Ballet of Canada**: Rex Harrington and Owen Montague, from second to first soloist; Donald Dawson and Susan Dromisky, from corps de ballet to second soloist.

Randy Glynn will present a show at Toronto's Premiere Dance Theatre, April 21-25. Members of the **Randy Glynn Dance Project** include Glynn, Brigitte Bourbeau, France Bruyere, Pam Grundy and Steve Osborne (members of the Danny Grossman Dance Company), Tom Brouil-



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lette (Desrosiers Dance Theatre), Philip Drube (Dancemakers) and Coralee McLaren (School of Toronto Dance Theatre).

The program is scheduled to include *After Godot*, *Celtic Night*, *Trumpet Concerto* and two new works.

Windsor-based **Gina Lori Riley Dance Enterprises** will be in residence in Peterborough, April 27-May 1. The company will present a program of short works at ArtSpace, as well as performances of its new children's work, *Things That Go Bump in the Night*.

FastForward will be presented by **Dancemakers**, in its major Toronto engagement of the season, at Premiere Dance Theatre, May 26-30. It is a program of new works for live music and dance, created in collaboration with Arraymusic.

Participants include Carol Anderson (artistic director of Dancemakers), guest choreographers Susan Cash and Christopher House, Henry Kucharzyk (artistic director of Arraymusic), and composers Michael J. Baker and Ann Southam.

The Danceworks 50 Celebration of New Dance, featuring works—some commissioned for the festival—by independent choreographers from across Canada, will take place at Harbourfront's DuMaurier Theatre Centre in Toronto, June 16-21.

The Ontario School of Ballet will present its annual recital in Toronto, June 19. The program will feature a production of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, with choreography by members of the faculty.

The National Ballet of Canada has announced details of its 1987-88 Toronto season. Four new ballets will enter the repertoire: *Voluntaries* and a new work by Glen Tetley, Kenneth MacMillan's *Song of the Earth* and Jiri Kylian's *Forgotten Land*. And George Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco* will be revived for the company.

The fall performances (Nov. 6-29) at the O'Keefe Centre will feature the new Tetley ballet, *Concerto Barocco*, *La Fille Mal Gardée* and *Swan Lake* (with guest artist Fernando Bujones).

The Nutcracker will be presented Dec. 15-Jan. 3.

During the winter season (Feb. 10-29) the company will present *Forgotten Land*, *La Bayadère*, *Act II*, *Elite Syncopations*, *Don Quixote*, *The Dream* and *Components*.

The spring season (April 27-May 13) will feature *Song of the Earth*, *Voluntaries* and *Onegin*.

Evelyn Hart, principal dancer with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, will return to dance a variety of ballets throughout the year.

David La Hay gave his final performance with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens on Jan-

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uary 3 at Place des Arts in Montreal, dancing the role of the Sugar Plum Fairy's Cavalier in *The Nutcracker*.

A dancer with the company for 13 years, he has now assumed the position of assistant ballet master with Les Grands Ballets.

The March presentation by **Tangente Danse Actuelle** in Montreal was based on the theme *Le Corps Politique*. Among the artists scheduled to participate were Guy Déom, Sylvie Labelle, Sylvie Laliberté, Nathalie Derome, Andrew Harwood, Jeff Hall and Nathalie Lamarche, Carole Bergeron, Lee Ann Smith, Kathryn Ricketts, Pierre-Paul Savoie, Conrad Alexandrowicz and Paul-André Fortier.

Miryam Moutillet will present her *One Woman Show* at the Maison de la Culture du Plateau Mont-Royal in Montreal, April 1-5. The program includes *In Extremis*, *Nickel-Odeon* and *Desire et L'Homme invisible*.

Promotions at **Les Grands Ballets Canadiens**: Jean-Hugues Rochette, from soloist to senior artist; Judith Johnson, Nicole Lamontagne and Diane Partington, from demi-soloist to soloist; Andrew Gidai, from apprentice to corps de ballet.

O Vertigo danse will tour Europe this spring. Performances are scheduled for Brussels (April 16-17), Amsterdam (April 25-26), London (May 6-10) and Granada (May 28-29).

The company will perform three works by artistic director Ginette Laurin: *Up the Wall*, *Crash Landing* and excerpts from her newest work, *Full House*.

Full House, in its completed form, will receive its premiere at the second International Festival of New Dance in Montreal in September.

Margie Gillis will perform at Le Théâtre Maisonneuve at Place des Arts in Montreal, April 29-May 10.

The program will include two world premieres: Gillis' *The Testimony of the Rose* and *The Habit*, choreographed by John Butler. Also scheduled are three Montreal premieres: *Magritte* and *The Little Animal*, both by Gillis, and *Vers la Glace*, a collaborative effort by Gillis, James Kudelka and Christopher Gillis.

At the end of May, Margie Gillis will travel to Jerusalem, where she will dance *Garden of Earthly Delights*.

During the summer she will begin a six-month tour which will take her to France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Turkey.

Jeanne Robinson, artistic director of **Nova Dance Theatre**, announced in January that the Halifax-based company would close its doors at the end of March 1987. **DancExchange**, which offered dance classes to the general public, also ceased operations. ●

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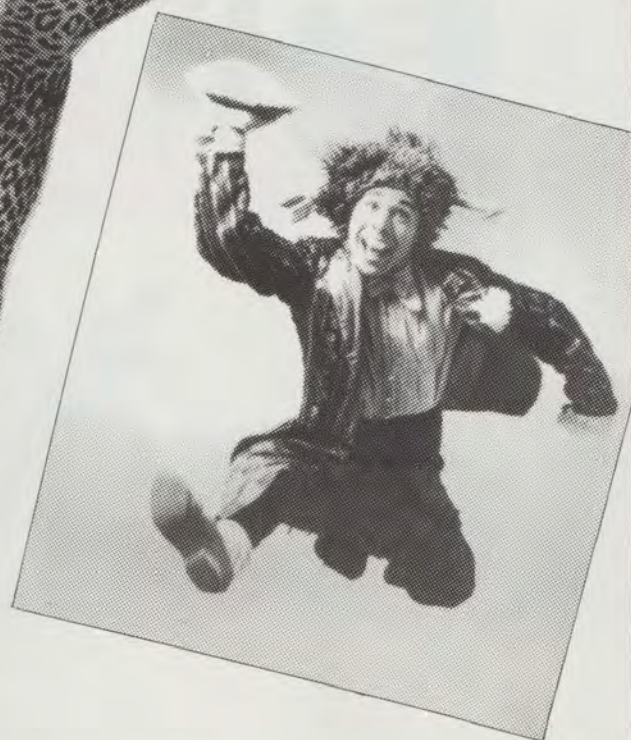
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