

Beatty - Earle - Randazzo

by Carol Anderson

Three decades have passed since the first performances of Patricia Beatty's New Dance Group of Canada, and the earliest Toronto Dance Theatre performance in December 1968. Toronto Dance Theatre's influence is wide, deep and long now. The company's origins are an integral part of the web of growth of dance in Canada, as are all the works made by Peter Randazzo, Trish Beatty (as she is known to the dance community) and David Earle, the company's founders, during those first years -- years of conflict and maturing artistry, years of pain and opening horizons, years of beauty and ecstasy, years of tenacity, years of change.

Toronto Dance Theatre has changed enormously from its founding identity. But many moments from the founders' body of work burn on. They live in me as vivid images, moments of great beauty and spirit. Part of art, part of us, part of dance, and not now to be taken for granted.

Where did they come from, what fired them, these dances of the human spirit? It is



Randazzo

possible to glimpse, in considering the work, a shared and high idealism, an understanding of striving. It is possible to see these three individuals living their passion for their art -- their respect for the danced language evolved by Martha Graham, which transmuted through them, and their determination and devotion to making a place for dance as art. Their decades at TDT associated the three choreographers as an artistic triumvirate, but they have always run on parallel tracks creatively.

Trish Beatty recalls, "...the three of us... were very unlikely partners, and we didn't always trust each other. It wasn't always easy. But, what we were being asked to do was bigger than our selves and our psyches and our styles...It was this thing that we were giving ourselves to that was bigger than us, that kept us together. It had to be planted here, in this part of the world. So we were asked to do it, and it was better that we do it together."

Together, they created an enormous body of potent works of art.

It's hard, says David, to remember the motivation of 30 years ago. But not really. Pe-

ter, Trish and David had a mission. They still do. They speak, independently, of the surge and urge of dance. Of how it was given them to seed something here. How they were in the grip of something. David says, "I think we hoped to create a similar kind of arena to the one we witnessed in New York -- where people would take dance seriously, and believe that it had a philosophic potential, and that one could learn about the nature of existence by watching people dance."

Peter Randazzo says he doesn't know why he was in such a hurry to make so many works. He says he never had a plan. But perhaps it was a kind of foresight on his part. The circumstances of the first fifteen years of TDT -- relative stability, esteem, a company of superb dancers -- supported his spontaneous, inquisitive creativity. For him



Earle

the fascination of making dances is in the studio, in the process of "cracking puzzles." He speaks about going to "another place" -- seeing this in Anna Blewchamp's work *Arrival of All Time* and in Kathryn Brown's *Waiting*, both made in the mid-70's, and how frightening this sense

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Beatty



OPENING REMARKS

Probably 95% of all of Canada's theatrical dance history has vanished ... been thrown out with the garbage ... or just plain forgotten.

DCD has possibly found about 10% of what's left of this remaining 5%. That has taken fifteen years. What's still to be found? The best prospect at this time is about another 10%.

The DCD Archives is filled with thousands of records of people and events which have been part of the ongoing process of making dance.

As Northrop Frye once said: "The thing about good art is that it refuses to go away."

Carol Anderson's article on Beatty, Earle and Randazzo emphasizes the irony of the situation. These three have created an enormous bank of dance works. But who will be able to view these works 100 years from now - even 5 years from now?

Our argument is that we cannot know if any of this endowment will "refuse to go away" without a mechanism to assure its ongoing presence.

Dance people have a big problem to overcome. Living in the constant "urgency of the day" -- the "now" syndrome that permeates the art form -- offers no time for reflection.

There will always be "new" work, but will there always be "old" work? If there is "old" work, which is alive and being seen, then perhaps the rest of the world will begin to think that there are some dance treasures. Dance people are the only ones who can find a solution for this disappearing art. But, if the dance practitioners don't give a damn about the works, neither will the dance audience.

Lawrence and Miriam Adams

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New in the Archives

Québec Été Danse

Yves Cousineau joined the National Ballet Company in the early 1950's. A student of Elizabeth Leese, Yves became known as much for his feet as his famous "cameo" roles in the Company's productions for the next two decades. In the early 1970's Cousineau joined the York University Dance Department where he taught for many years.



Danish dancer Lucile Grahn, in *Pas de Venus*, 1844. One of the prints reproduced in the Québec Été Danse catalogue.

In 1982, Cousineau took over the reins of Québec Été Danse, an organisation founded by Jacqueline Lemieux in 1976 as a centre for study, research and performance in dance. Originally residing at Bishop's University in Lennoxville, by 1982 it had moved to Sherbrooke University with new plans and projects. An exhibition and catalogue of 18th and 19th century dance prints was assembled from Canadian companies and individuals. Film series were scheduled, leading choreographers including Desrosiers, Lock and Fortier were invited to produce new works, exchange programmes were planned with the Centre d'Arts d'Orford, and programs to bring guest artists from Jacob's Pillow were organized.

Cousineau has deposited material related to Québec Été Danse with the Ar-

Theatre marquee from the Royal Theatre, Victoria.

chives, including several video tapes of works choreographed in Sherbrooke.

Myrna Aaron

There are two types of photography: 1) the slick, contrived, image making professional look; 2) the candid, often slightly out-of-focus, informal, sometimes embarrassing "snap-shot". Both approaches tell a story. These photos can evoke treasured moments - a way of recalling the "look and feel" of past events, friends and situations.

DCD Archives is pursuing these "visual memories" from dancers (and there are always some) who made sure that their camera was handy and were unabashed about assuring a personal record for the future.

Myrna Aaron was (and still is) one of those people who hold a substantial collection of "memories", all carefully kept in photo albums.

Myrna, a student of Boris Volkoff and Bettina Byers, joined the fledgling National Ballet Company in 1951 at the age of 16.

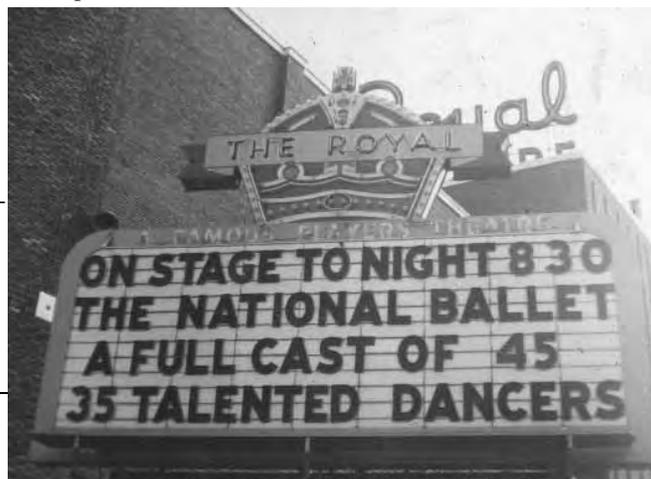
When the Company was in Vancouver and the dancers were ordered "not to go skiing", her camera devilishly records the following day with dancers on a mountain wearing skis. Director Celia Franca is seen ginchng for the camera with the caption "Public opinion no longer bothers me."

Grant Strate was caught in costume as the Faune, bare chested with make-up, horns, smoking his pipe, and having the crotch of his wool tights delicately repaired. Parties at Bert Anderson's; a drunken costume birthday party in Medicine Hat; Antony Tudor with his dog, being coy at Jacob's Pillow -- all hold poignant meaning to Myrna and the story of the earliest days of the National Ballet Company.

DCD will continue to look for these informative records - the human side of dance and in many ways the anecdotal icing on the cake.

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One last note: the illustration on the back cover of this issue of The Magazine comes from a 1906 playbill from His Majesty's Theatre in Montreal. It was part of an advertisement for Yildiz Magnums, Egyptian Cigarettes.



Jean Stoneham Canada's First Giselle

*The following is an edited excerpt from a chapter in Leland Windreich's latest book, **Dance Encounters**, a compilation of selected essays, published by Dance Collection Danse Press/es in 1998.*

One hundred and seven years after the premiere of the ballet *Giselle*, a young Canadian dancer took on this coveted role in a production mounted in Ottawa by a pioneer ballet establishment. The year was 1948, and ballet in Canada had yet to achieve a full professional status. The Winnipeg Ballet, then in its tenth year, was perhaps the most advanced in that respect: it paid its dancers a pittance, and it had begun to tour. From Vancouver to Halifax small performing groups gave entertaining performances featuring new choreography and snippets from the classics. That same year, the first of six Canadian Ballet Festivals was held in Winnipeg. Ludmilla Chiriaeff and Celia Franca, founders in the next decade of two major Canadian ballet companies, were still working in Europe, unaware of their destinies.

Giselle was announced as the project for the Ottawa Ballet's second concert in 1948, and Jean Stoneham was groomed for six months to perform for one night in the coveted role. Small, with fine bones and a perfect ballet physique, a heart-shaped face, large brown eyes and a radiant smile, Stoneham had all the nascent qualities of a ballerina at age eighteen. Born in Edinburgh, she maintained links with her heritage when her family moved to Canada by learning the gamut of the Highland dance repertoire. During her tenth year her parents lived in Vancouver, where Jean was taken to ballet classes with June Roper. She made her stage debut with nineteen other pre-teens, dancing a mazurka in Roper's *Ballet des Enfants* at the Strand Theatre. Then her father's business took the family to Saskatchewan and finally to Ottawa, where she continued her ballet studies with Louisa Macdonald, appearing in recitals and eventually performing classical solos. When the Le Duc-Toumine School opened, it offered the kind of professional training she required.

For her, *Giselle* was a unique opportunity to learn a great role without any biases, for she had never seen a live production nor a film of the ballet. Nesta Toumine eschewed private coaching by a ballerina experienced in the role, preferring to convey to her pupil a composite of the finest elements in the

four Ballet Russe interpretations she had observed.

Svatoslav Toumine designed the décor for Canada's first *Giselle*. He and Nesta decided on orange and brown tones instead of the traditional blue for *Giselle*'s first act costume, creating a stage picture of autumnal colours as complement.

A company of sixty-five was involved in the production, and for the first time the Ottawa Ballet offered an orchestra in the pit, conducted by Paul Lars. The Capitol Theatre, built to accommodate both stage and screen offerings, was more than adequate for a ballet premiere.

Imported to dance Albrecht was the twenty-nine year-old Vladimir Dokoudovsky, on loan from Colonel de Basil's original Ballet Russe, where he excelled in many demi-caractère ballets and had recently added the Petipa Bluebird to his accomplishments. This was very likely his first Albrecht and possibly his last, as *Giselle* was not actively maintained in his



Jean Stoneham in Nesta Toumine's staging of *Giselle* for the Ottawa Ballet company, 1948.

home company's repertoire. To the young Ottawa troupe he brought the glamour of Russian ballet and the professionalism he had acquired from sixteen years as a performer in Europe and America.

On March 5, 1948, Canada's first *Giselle* was shown to an elegant audience, which first paid homage to the Governor-General and the Viscountess Alexandra of Tunis before settling in to enjoy a harmonious, high spirited production. Nesta Toumine's choreography appears to have followed the Ballet Russe version faithfully; she even included the episode in which peasant men shoot dice in the forest at dusk and are frightened away by the eerie presence of the Willis. Svatoslav Toumine, a veteran of many Ballet Russe *Giselles*, lent his authoritative presence to the scene in the role of Hilarion.

A review by B.W. in the *Ottawa Journal* had high praise for the unexpected professionalism of the production. Jean Stoneham's interpretation won raves: Her grace and lightness were a delight but her ability reached full bloom in the mad dance discovering her lover's deception, she loses her mind and stabs herself. Every nuance of her disillusionment was vividly portrayed through exceptional dancing and acting.

Jean Stoneham never danced *Giselle* again, in Ottawa or elsewhere, and the Ottawa Ballet's *Giselle* was consigned to history after a single night of glory for all concerned. Nesta Toumine had other plans for her instant prima ballerina. With a Canadian star, there was no need to bring in a pair of exotic guests each season. In 1949 Stoneham danced the Snow Queen and the Sugar Plum Fairy in a revival of *The Nutcracker*, partnered by Herbert Bliss from the Ballet Society of New York. The following year she took on Odette in Nesta Toumine's production of the second act of *Swan Lake*, this time partnered by Paul Szilard. That year Szilard invited her to New York where he created a short ballet for her at the Hunter College Playhouse dance series.

During these years Stoneham worked as secretary to the Ottawa manager of Confederation Life and continued her dual existence - office worker by day, ballerina by night. When the National Ballet was formed and Celia Franca began recruiting, Jean's fortunes changed. An alternate offer from the Winnipeg Ballet seemed more attractive, and she put her business talents on the back burner.

In Winnipeg and on the road with the company, Jean excelled in its classical offerings and in the many spirited character ballets. Ultimately she retired to marry Milton Orr and to raise six children. Vancouver has been her home for many years, and there she has been one of the most active promoters of ballet that the city has ever had. After stepping down as President of Ballet British Columbia's Board, she served as Coordinator of its Artistic Advisory Committee, concurrently holding down a nine to five position as an executive trainer for Coast Paper. Upon her retirement she took on the part-time position of Executive Director of the Vancouver Ballet Society.

As for the Ottawa Ballet, it continued to function under the Toumines into the mid-1960's, but its efforts were overshadowed by the emergence of a splendidly endowed ballet establishment in Toronto. In 1952 when Celia Franca's new National Ballet blindly announced a forthcoming production of Canada's first *Giselle*, Nesta Toumine's outraged response was vociferous. Pioneer work, alas, is shortly forgotten, and the vision of trailblazers too soon becomes the stuff of ballet history.

Jeanne Rodier Memories

by Carol Behnan

When Jeanne and I meet these days we usually go out for lunch. She insists that she never had time to learn to cook, and I enjoy the venue, Ireland's Inn, right on the beach in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Over seafood for me, and liver for Jeanne, she questions me about the latest Montreal dance news, while I try to bring the subject around to Montreal from the 1920's to the 1960's, a time when I was either not born, or still in my native England, and she was busy studying, dancing, choreographing and teaching during a fascinating period of dance development in Canada. Jeanne reminds me of the Sphinx when he speaks during the "Son et Lumière" show at the pyramids, and says "my eyes have seen"... proceeding to recount five thousand years of history!

Just how did this present-day friendship develop from what was only an acquaintanceship of over thirty years ago? During a visit to the library of Québec's École Supérieure de Danse, Vincent Warren, the dance historian, asked me whether I had known Mary Beetles; research was indicating she had died in 1960. Since I'd arrived from England in late 1960 to work for the Marilyn Harrison Studios, and had met Mary Beetles quite frequently over the next three years, I knew this to be incorrect. Wishing to be helpful I ferreted out some old programmes from 1962, when the Beetles school's performing group Ballet Entre Nous and Marilyn's Festival Ballet group had combined forces to present several shows.

This led me to contact a friend, Carol Anne O'Connell, a Ballet Entre Nous dance captain of that period, who informed me that Jeanne Rodier, the long-time Vice-Principal of the school, was hale and hearty in Florida, and living only a ten minute drive from my winter home! At our first meeting Jeanne was not sure she really wanted to revive so many memories of her Canadian life, but she gradually warmed to the subject, and over post-luncheon cups of tea, the first of her precious scrapbooks appeared from a bedroom closet. Over the last few months a fascinating tale has evolved, both from a personal and historical perspec-

tive.

Jeanne is coquettishly secretive about her true age, resisting all efforts both subtle and obvious on my part to extract this vital information. She does however, remember with remarkable clarity, the date of her first ballet lesson - February 28, 1928! This momentous day was the debut of a passion for "the dance" which has lasted for seventy years.



Jeanne Rodier in the 1947 Montreal Opera Guild production of *Seraglio*.

As were all the main Montreal studios of the era, the reputed Sheffler school where she enrolled was downtown. Jeanne walked to classes, accompanied by an older family member, and rode the streetcar home in the evening. All the students wore "half" skirts and short stockings in class even in the worst winter weather, since flesh-coloured tights were made of expensive silk and thus reserved only for performances. Because the heating could be erratic, some of the mothers would knit woollen tights while gossiping and waiting for their offspring.

Jeanne airily dismisses her first dance appearance on stage as unimportant, "An oriental number with a group," but by her second

year of lessons she was allotted a solo, both on pointe, and in a tutu. This success started to thaw out the disapproving Rodier side of her family. In those days a young lady from a respectable family could take recreational dance lessons, but to think of a career, or "monter sur les planches" was almost unthinkable. The Rodiers, who counted a mayor of Montreal in their number, as well as many other fine, upstanding, bourgeois citizens, disapproved of young Jeanne's ambitions. She had only returned to Montreal with her sister and mother after the untimely death of her father, a French-Canadian doctor, well-established in Manchester, New Hampshire. As a result of this migration, Jeanne is fluently bilingual. We always chat in both languages, and when I consult my notes they are almost unintelligible because of the linguistic jumble.

Ruth St. Denis visited the Sheffler school around this period, and all the students were lined up to meet her, dressed for the occasion in their best draped tunics (very like the ones in the famous photo of Maestro Cecchetti with his students in London). Although extremely shy at that age, Jeanne remembers plucking up all her courage to ask the illustrious visitor "how may I know if I shall succeed in dance?" The answer she remembers to this day: "A very good question darling - if you love dancing enough to have it for breakfast, lunch and dinner, then you can't miss!"

The opening of the first Mary Beetles studio in 1930 was to affect the next thirty years of Jeanne's life. Her favourite teacher at the Sheffler school, a beautiful Californian named Betty Graham, was enticed back to Montreal from a stint of performing in New York, this time to teach at the Beetles school. Jeanne quickly became a senior student at the school,

and not long thereafter started teaching the junior lessons. The studio had an unusual feature. It was housed in a former fire station, and the fireman's pole had been replaced by a wooden-balustraded, spiral staircase. As Jeanne recounted to me, the tap teacher, another American named Beale Fletcher, would hoist her over his shoulder and tap his way from top to bottom. She insisted to me that she protested loudly at this treatment, but at the same time her eyes twinkled behind her thick-lensed glasses, as she chuckled over the memory.

Jeanne's scrapbooks and photo albums contain items of interest to all Canadian



Jeanne Rodier and Mary Beetles.

dance aficionados. One beautifully bound album contains autographed photographs of many famous dancers from the 1930's to 1950's, while others are crammed with press clippings, programmes, and photographs of Jeanne, her students and the many shows she was involved in.

From one clipping I jotted down a list of Jeanne's teachers during some of the many summers she spent studying in New York during the thirties and forties. I soon realised it was practically a "Who's Who" of the times, with most of the names to be found in Chujoy's Dance Encyclopedia. By the early fifties some familiar Canadian faces start to appear in the albums, including the founding artistic director of the National Ballet of Canada, Celia Franca.

Jeanne's description of her first meeting with Celia Franca in 1950 was especially vivid. Designated to meet Franca as she arrived in Montreal from England to observe the third Canadian Ballet Festival, the two ladies soon found themselves shopping in the Ogilvys department store, where the visitor bought a cap-sleeved blouse of cream lace, and a mid-calf length, brown skirt to wear at the reception organised in her honour by Jeanne and other local dance teachers. To this day Jeanne cherishes Christmas cards sent by Celia Franca over the years. One of the earliest shows her dressed as Swanhilda and partnered by David Adams. It was only natural that with the return of the charismatic Celia Franca to Canada the next year, and the organisation of summer courses in Toronto, the annual "south to New York" summer ritual transformed itself into a "west to Toronto" migration, with serious studies in the Cecchetti method being undertaken by Jeanne and other Montreal dance teachers.

Jeanne's albums abound with photos of the annual Beetles' studio shows, and the beauty of the costumes is quite remarkable. Amateur dancers they may have been in most cases, but the costumes and presentation were very professional. Over the years productions such as *Les Sylphides* gave

way to the tap-dancing, war-time efforts of the Troop Show, and then the group of older students became known as Ballet Entre Nous. The profits from the shows were always given to charity, and Jeanne told me that Mary Beetles discreetly helped many poorer students over the years, especially during the Second World War, when they had a number of refugees enrolled in the school. Most students studied for pleasure, but some went on to careers on Broadway, Radio City Music Hall and elsewhere. Modern dancer George Erskine Jones for example,

and Robert Ito, who performed first for the National Ballet of Canada, then in *Flower Drum Song*, then later on television in *Quincy*. Jeanne herself was also very involved for many years, first as a dancer, then as a choreographer, in the productions of the Opera Guild under the leadership of Madame Donald. On one occasion, most likely in 1947, she told me she rushed off

to New York to consult Boris Romanoff at the Metropolitan Opera, to learn the dances for *Seraglio* one day and teaching them in Montreal the next!

Jeanne gradually assumed more responsibilities over the years, first as a senior teacher, then director of the school, which by 1940 had settled, they hoped permanently, into even better premises on Decarie Boulevard. Even now, the shock and pain are evident, as Jeanne tells me how suddenly in 1963 the building's owners had refused to renew the lease. A frantic search for premises led to a short-lived coalition with

Lea Cohen's school that was in a small shopping centre. At the same time Jeanne, who holds dual citizenship, was being tempted by offers to move back to the United States, and so she regretfully left Montreal for Florida where she continued teaching for many years, spending her summers however, until a few years ago, in her country home near Valleyfield, Quebec.

These days one could call her "actively retired". Her present home is an elegant beach-front condo, where she attempts to keep her far younger friends in shape by giving them dance lessons in the communal exercise room - woe to me if I've gained more than a few pounds between visits! I am trying to convince her of the value of her souvenirs, and trying to persuade her to bequeath them to a Canadian organisation capable of conserving them for posterity. I suspect she feels far too young to even consider the idea for the moment.

I thank Jeanne for her friendship, and all the knowledge I have gained from her in recent months. May our friendship continue for many years to come.

Carol Behnan is a Montreal dance teacher who has held a long time interest in the history of dance in Quebec.



Rodier photo from a 1933 performance programme of The Canadian Ballet.

from Page 1. Beatty, Earle, Randazzo

of lifting the veil can be to a creator. He talks about sitting in an empty room. Sitting. And eventually standing up, going to fill a negative, a hole in the space; or sometimes seeing a particular dancer in one of these holes. Standing in one, beginning to move. He speaks of a sense of having to let the dance take its course and move through him -- literally, and differently, as both choreographer and dancer in his own works. The sense of him being a channel is quite profound. He speaks of not getting in the way of the dance, of how certain movement is right for certain dances, and about how one work sometimes begot another. One of the things he has liked, he says, is that none of his dances look like him.

Inspiration for Peter has come from different sources. Rehearsing *The Amber Garden* (his choreography of 1972) one day, he grew impatient with its romanticism. Suddenly he asked the dancers to sit down close to him, facing him, and start talking. Gradually he backed them up, still talking, gave them a canon of dance phrases, pulled in Claudia Moore from her break, and threw on a tape of Michael Conway Baker's music which he'd found too "dis-jointed" for his liking previously. "It was absolutely perfect," he recalls. "I changed nothing." This was the birth of *Recital* (1977), a satiric, theatrical work. It's a case in point too of his changeable way of making dances. Some, he says, take forever -- *Summer Evening*, his last work at TDT, took 10 years from idea to realization. Others take 20 minutes. At certain points, notably in the mid-70's, Randazzo has been inspired by painting. Magritte, Dennis Hopper and Michelangelo have all fired his imagination into action, in *L'Assassin Menacé*, *Nighthawks*, the pavane from *A Simple Melody*.

"...I had been to all these museums and seen so many fabulous things by Michelangelo -- I said, if I could ever do anything as beautiful as he has sculpted, I don't think I'd want to ever make another dance...I felt I had done that with the Pavane, and yet I didn't stop at that point."

... flaming traces of beauty and aspiration

Why do certain works of visual art pique him to respond? He cannot say. Compelling images, something in the spatial tensions. A responsive creator, no question. To me it seems his earliest works were mythic, very abstract in their fascination with stage time and ambiguous relationships. Later his works were funny, or pointedly dark, a nighttime landscape of loneliness. Seeing Peter dance in *L'Assassin Menacé* was a revelation; he was brilliant, bizarre, sardonic, possessed -- the dance itself. Still later in his choreographic life he was moved by music - Steve Reich, Astor Piazzola. And often, he was inspired by particular qualities of dancers he worked



Patricia Beatty in her work *Lessons in Another Language*.

Photo: Andrew Oxenham

with, drew out of them new qualities of motion and emotion. In his solo for her, *Enter the Dawn*, he remembers that Sara Pettit was unrecognizable when she first danced it. His homage, in a way, to the mysterious beauties of certain dancers, revealed only though their brief, incandescent lives on a stage. Honouring their enigmatic uniqueness. And also very revealing of his love for dancing, and his own understanding of true, pure dance. His dances have often looked devilishly difficult to do. He speaks of the intense joy and utter simplicity of being able "to dance beyond my mental comprehension of what I was doing physically."

Trish Beatty imparts a sense of mystery about creation as well. She recalls responding, when William Littler asked her about *First Music* (1969), "I don't know, I guess it's about death." A seed, a symbol, a beautiful, intuitive accord of quest and expression. Explored fully, deeply later on, the play of myth and archetype, and a serious philosophical timbre became characteristic of Trish's dances. There has always been something exalted, heady, a grandeur in her work. A special sense of place. Her dances are finely worked vessels, detailed, crafted with great care.

Part of Trish's dance life has always been teaching. She recalls saying to students,

"It's not in the economy, politicians don't bother with it, you won't get famous or rich, but you'll have people say, 'Oh I always wanted to be a dancer'. Because it's archetypally very, very strong. Because it's about being in your body and being free at the same time, not being limited by your body. If you live in your mind...there's no self-possession, no power in the body, no joy...It's a thing that gets sick and can make love and gets old and that's about it. Where for us it's full of nuance and power and this feeling of *size*..."

I remember watching Trish dance *First Music*. Long, elegant, a sense of power from the inner shape of motivation coming through her body. "We were used to *being* something," she comments on the wholeness of the theatrical vision they were dancing. Dance for her, in those early years, was an expression in which her face as well as her body was alive, where inner life took form. *First Music*, this spare, exquisite work, is a resonant moment in the whole sweep of her dance creations. I have seen it danced by Nancy Ferguson, and later by Grace Miyagawa, but never again with the same depthless sense of the joining of image and motion with which its creator danced the work.

Her strong feminist aspirations have un-



David Earle's *Frost Watch*, 1980. Dancer: Grace Miyagawa.

Photo: Frank Richards

derpinned her work. She says wryly, "How did I think I was going to change 2,000 years of history all by myself, and be included as a woman, equally, even respected?"

Trish's work now is guided by her spiritual convictions. In a sense this has always seemed so. A sense of bigness has always lived in her work. She has always been interested in challenges of feminism, in politics and economic issues, and in the deep motion of myth in our culture. Whether it was to address the idea of death, as in *Against Sleep* (1968), recently remounted at TDT's 30th anniversary performances, whether it was comic, as *Harold Morgan's Delicate Balance* (1973), abstract, as in *Study for a Song in the Distance* (1969), or the huge canvas of *Painters and the Dance* (1983), whether it was serene and elemental, as *Skyling* (1980) or *Seastill* (1979), there has always been a very serious artistic quest supporting her work's aspirations.

Commenting both about her own work and about Peter, she said, "What Peter cared for was a strong reaction...didn't care

whether it was for or against. He couldn't stand this Canadian carefulness. That also meant you'd have done something...When I first did *Seastill*, there was bravoing and boing, and I knew I'd done something."

With more recent work, including *Garden of Origins* (1993), *Gaia* (1990), *Mandala*

It's not coming back to reality, it's coming back to the lie...

(1993), Trish has entered a creative zone of preoccupation with spiritual matters, and the enigma of how to make manifest the spirit in flesh. Her evening-length event *Dancing the Goddess* has had two incarnations, in 1993 and 1995, attracting a whole new audience with its blend of ritual and spiritually-motivated creation.

David Earle recalls the beginnings of his life in dance and his early idea of creation as dominated by his background with children's theatre and acting. "I think when we encountered the Graham company and Graham technique we saw for the first time what you might call art dance. It wasn't so

much the steps as everyone's sense that there was a potential significance in movement in exposing the reality of human nature." David's work is a panoply. Musically it spans whole cultures and histories, from the Ray Charles suite to the Mozart Requiem, from *Waltzing Matilda* to Arvo Pärt. As soon as he started to create, his interests in painting, in visual art, in music, streamed together.

David has created more than a hundred works, including commissions for the stage, for opera and for television, as well as the works he created at TDT. Always, his work has a humanist edge. His very first work was *Angelic Visitation #1*, to music by Frank Martin. He wanted to create a Fra Angelico annunciation, but he also had the image of the bed Mary was lying in being the angel. This brought out the idea of the young woman's need to embrace the male in order to mature and to grow creatively. He speaks of, years later, starting to make a duet in a cold studio in Victoria. He was wearing an army greatcoat, and began to pace out the rhythm of the music he was using. Then he asked Danielle Baskerville, with whom he was to create a duet, to climb on his back, thinking to carry her. In the second section of the dance they reversed roles; she became Death, who he had carried on his back. A perfect mirror image of his first angelic visitation, a full circle. The choreographer in a cold studio, looking for a dance, unable to see what was with him all the time. Later the duets became a core part of *Maelstrom* (1995).

David created *Sacra Conversazione*, one of his most-performed works, at the Banff Centre in 1984. He comments, "I remember I decided in Banff I didn't want the dancers to wear any makeup... A ballerina from the Alberta Ballet...danced, for the first time in her life, with no makeup. She moved herself beyond recovery...She had unleashed something so gigantic in herself by being herself. She had never been seen as herself...I suddenly realized that it wasn't about fantasy, that it was about reality. Everything off the stage is a fantasy that we all contribute to, that we've all agreed to. I call it the Great Lie. We've all bought into it because everyone we ever knew did. There didn't seem to be any choice. Then I thought, we have this chance to show these fragments of reality to people... I realized when I was onstage performing that I felt more intensely my unique existence as a being than I did in any other context. Very shocking. Somehow you're free of all the control. That's why it takes time to come back. It's not coming back to reality, it's coming back to the lie..."

David's works often have a liturgical or religious or mythic cast. He is a prolific creator of new icons for a secular time, a priest of lost sacred theatre. David looks beyond the "system" now, finding the usual dance audience targets too narrow. "I'm interested," he says, "in presenting dance for people who love architecture, who love music, who love humanity." *A Thread of Sand*,



Peter Randazzo's *L'Assassin Menacé*, premiered 1975.

(1969) his beautiful mass for the anguish of Mary Magdalen, was the first work, he says, which really seemed to affect people. His heart, when David dances himself, is out there for all to read. It's a rare thing to see him onstage now, vulnerable, dancing with rich simplicity. He always gets to me. He did dancing *Yesterday*, his solo in the *Ray Charles Suite* two decades ago. He did as the old soldier in *Maelstrom*, in his baggy army coat, a couple of years ago. He gets to me. I always cry.

Speaking of David's immense craft, Peter Randazzo says, "David Earle...will make me so depressed watching a dance I want to commit suicide. But at the end, there's a ray of hope, and that's craft. Not many people have that. And also, he is a master at moving large groups of people. Part of it is patience...he can do it in a way that very few people on the planet can do it. Now if David had been working in ballet he'd be a multi-millionaire, he'd be the Great White Hope. A ballet company that had David Earle as a choreographer-in-residence, with the works he's choreographed historically, *Thread of Sand*, *Herod*, *Field of Dreams*, *Atlantis*, you name it, they'd be touring the world."

So extraordinarily different, these three creators, linked by bonds of idealism and realism. It's fascinating to think of the different shapes of career for each of them. David, romantic, a missionary; a musical crescendo; dances like conch shells, richly coloured, wound and spiralled, spectacular, a sweep of sea and tides, a wash of bodies like water crashing at the shore. Peter, intense, sardonic, circumflexes and acute accents, spiky accents of another language, like maybe he choreographed sometimes in Hungarian; a quarter-note rest, a hair's-breadth pause, engaging physical challenges for the dancers, rapidfire fingersnapping -- a scallop shell snapping shut, a pilgrim's emblem. Trish, a spiral, expanding outward in

reach and significance, widening to a spirit dimension -- a nautilus, chambered, shining, her feminine mind, curving, moved gently by time and astrality, strong as water, earthy and respectful, a finely detailed face of beauty.

The accumulated wisdom of Peter, Trish and David. Think of their combined years in the theatre. All three live and create outside the "system" now. They should at this point have the means to make the art which they would like to make. What painter can not? What musician?

All three of them talk about food. As though some essential nourishment which they have provided has now gone missing

This was an art form that needed to be able to stand beside literature and film and painting and architecture

for them. Peter talks about maintaining himself physically in his ideal image -- a discipline, a way of bridging from dance to the "real world" where he talks about living and surviving, and still being ready to step on stage. David speaks about food as a miracle -- about being so knocked out, for instance, by the unlikeliness of airplane dinners, 30,000 feet in the air, that he has on occasion wept. About how he is never sure that he will be fed. About how, coming home exhausted after the opening of *Akhenaten* (1980), a work he brought to the stage by dragging and sweating it to life, Michael Carlevale called to him on the street. His restaurant was closed, but Carlevale, alchemist of Toronto culinary change, poured wine and cooked dinner himself. David is grateful. He does not take things for granted. For Trish food seems a symbol of the meshing of body and spirit. For her, food has been a path to rejuvenation, to health.

All of them were affected by the feeling of idealism alive during the 60's, which spurred them to carry on with their work. They made collaboration work at Toronto Dance Theatre, long before it was touted as a desirable and practical form. I don't know that they have ever been credited for this way in which they operated, year after year, with the aim of creating dances, and training a company of superb artists who could also teach. Trish recalls, "...we were not dancing about dancing. And we used the word "theatre" on purpose because we thought it had to look like life. This was an art form that needed to be able to stand beside literature and film and painting and architecture. It wasn't any kind of entertainment... There was this positive feeling in America that whatever field you were in, it was going to save the world. So for us it was dance. It was possible, in your hands, if you had enough passion, and you dedicated yourself enough, you could save the world."

It remains to look in detail at the Toronto Dance Theatre founders' remarkable reservoir of work. This work, the life's blood of its creators, mostly lives out of time now, in the minds and hearts of its audience. Their dancing, their engagement body and soul with the art which inspired and empowered them, is almost gone. I feel grateful for the moments they have left me with, resonances of seriousness and idealism, flaming traces of beauty and aspiration. Somehow it seems impossible that Peter, Trish and David won't continue to be driven, each in their own way, to continue to seek and express truth.

Carol Anderson spoke with Patricia Beatty, with David Earle and with Peter Randazzo in Toronto in January 1999. She also consulted Jillian Officer's list of TDT works from 1968-1980.



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Changing the landscape Marianne Livant and Modern Dance in Regina

by Connie Moker Wernikowski

I remember first meeting Marianne Livant in the summer of 1975 when I joined the Regina Modern Dance Workshop as a dancer after graduating from York University's dance program. Grant Strate had recommended me as I was originally from Saskatchewan, so Marianne phoned me in Prince Albert, where I was visiting my parents, and asked me to come to Regina to meet her. I went to her house and we began to talk over tea. We both agreed that modern dance should not be mystifying, and that education was a key part of the performance process. We had a wonderful discussion and agreed philosophically, so Marianne hired me on the spot without seeing me dance! This was typical of Marianne. Her direction and philosophic vision were most important and she wanted to work with people who shared that. Apparently, co-director of the Company, Maria Formolo, who was away studying, was taken aback that Marianne had hired me without an audition. It eventually worked out as I also could dance.

Marianne lived, worked and danced in Regina from 1967 until 1990, where her work left a legacy of inspiration, ideas and dance artists. I had the privilege of dancing and working with Marianne from 1975 to 1978. This article reflects facts of her life and career and also some of my own anecdotes and memories.

Much of the information for this article was taken from an interview between Barbara Cameron and Marianne Livant in 1996 for a project entitled, the History of the Professional Dance Companies in Saskatchewan.

In 1967 Marianne arrived in Regina from the U.S. with her husband and family. She began dancing when she was twenty-nine years old at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor while raising her two sons. She also studied at Connecticut College, the American University in Washington D.C., Boston University, Colorado Springs, and in New York City studios. Her mentors included José Limón, Hanya Holm and Bella Lewitzky.

Before she even stepped into a dance studio she had lived a very full and interesting life. She was a nurse and in 1954 worked under the auspices of the American Quaker Friends Committee in the village of Pare-

done in Nayarit, Mexico where she worked alongside the public health nurse, as well as helping to dig wells and build a school.

Marianne came from a Jewish family living in Germany at the onset of World War II. She and her sister, Connie, made safe

piece in Regina's Wascana Park when Maria Formolo happened by. Maria had just spent seven years dancing with Le Groupe de la Place Royale in Montreal and was passing through Regina on her way to join the Anna Wyman Dance Theatre in Vancouver.

Maria liked what Marianne was doing and decided to stay in Regina and work with the group which was then called Regina Modern Dance Workshop. Maria's friend, Susan Jane Arnold, who was then working in the University of Regina Drama Department as a stage and lighting designer, contributed these skills to the group as well as taking on the role of manager.

The time was ripe. Marianne had laid the artistic groundwork in the community with



Maria Formolo, Christine Welsh, Marianne Livant, 1973/74 season.

Photo by Richard Gustin

passage to Scotland where they were cared for by what Marianne would later fondly call her "Scottish family". The sisters were reunited with members of their own family in New York City following the war.

After settling in Regina with her husband, Bill, who was a social science professor at the University of Regina, Marianne began to offer modern dance classes in the community. By 1970 she had founded a grassroots organization called Regina Choreographic Workshop, consisting mainly of university and high school students with an interest in dance. Inspired by the Globe Theatre's school plays, she developed her own unique performance model. She also began to conduct workshops for school teachers in and around Regina.

In 1972 Marianne was filming a dance

a grassroots approach, oriented toward local people and education. Maria was firmly connected with the professional world and wanted to experiment and push the boundaries with her choreography. As long as they could maintain the balance, the combination was headed for success both locally and nationally.

In September 1974 Regina Modern Dance Workshop became a professional company with seven dancers, under the co-direction of Marianne and Maria with Susan Jane as manager.

Marianne approached all her work with amazing energy and commitment. *Grab Bag* (1974) was choreographed to be used as a performance piece introducing school workshops. The dancers entered as a band of troubadours following Marianne, who

was playing a melody she composed on her recorder. It began with complex rhythmic movement and evolved into a vocal and movement exploration of action words. It was educational, fun for anyone to watch, and masterfully crafted. Her *Peter and the Wolf* (1976) was again a unique and well-crafted piece. She was very successful at capturing the intricacies and quirks of each instrument/character.

Marianne believed that the development of modern dance mirrored the history of music. She also believed that rhythm was a way of connecting with the audience. She wanted her dancers to be musically literate, to understand rhythmic and contrapuntal structures. She would say, "You must understand it if you want to move away from it." Marianne resigned from the Company in December of 1976, realizing painfully that she had lost control over the it's direction. In a letter to Barbara Cameron she wrote, "On the one hand, Maria and Susan Jane prioritized national recognition at all costs - even at the expense of forfeiting local reputation. On the other hand, I believed that the consolidation of the home base was most important of all. I stuck to my original philosophy encompassing strong ties to the educational community."

In 1982 Regina Modern Dance Works Company, which by then had been reduced to two dancers, folded due to financial problems.

Marianne always treated us with kindness and respect. To her we were people first - dancers second. In an interview with Barbara Cameron she said, "I taught life -- what it is to be a human being, to be alive. I taught more than dancing."

Marianne went on to found Prairie Dance Lab an amateur group which closely resembled her first Regina Choreographic Workshop, and to work as a dance therapist at the Regina General Hospital.

She retired, with her husband, to Victoria in 1990, where she continued to sing, dance, hike and kayak. In 1998 she returned to Mexico to volunteer as a human rights observer in Chiapas.

In September 1998 Marianne told me that she had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. As we, the dancers from RMDW, including Maria Formolo, heard the news, we began to write, telephone and flock to her side to say thank you and good-bye. This speaks to the fact that Marianne had a profound effect on all of our lives. She modelled indomitable passion, courage and vision. She taught us that dance is a gift for all, that everyone has the right to eat, to be sheltered, to be educated, and to DANCE.

Marianne Livant, one of the pioneers of modern dance in Saskatchewan, died on November 24, 1998.

Connie Moker Wernikowski is a modern dancer, choreographer and teacher living in Regina.

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