

A DANCE PANORAMA
1930 · 1950

**ENCORE!
ENCORE!**

ISSUE No. 1, 1985

BULLETIN

CELEBRATING TWO DECISIVE DANCE DECADES

Lawrence & Miriam Adams

Since we retired as professional dancers with the National Ballet Company 15 years ago, we have pursued our interests in all areas of dance - as choreographers, administrators, publishers and producers.

It was not until 1981 when we came across an old house programme from the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Toronto for the 1949 Canadian Ballet Festival that we began to realize how little we knew of Canadian dance history. We started to dig and what materialized was a veritable treasure chest!

The scope of what we have found convinced us of the necessity and the urgency of preserving this legacy.

It is an exciting and richly coloured past filled with the extremes of every human emotion. It is a typical story of the 30's and 40's - a story of incredible struggle, triumph and tenacity. Canadian theatrical dance was born in the depression, a time when the streets were the universities and artists were dedicated amateurs who did not have the audiences or financial support systems of today. These creators of theatrical dance sought roots in a young country looking elsewhere for its spirit and inspiration.

We have dedicated ourselves to rescuing as much of the original choreography as is possible and to this end we have instigated **Encore! Encore!**

Of the numerous choreographers who contributed to Canada's dance story, we were faced with the difficult decision of whose work to restage. After a thorough study, we decided on Nancy Lima-Dent, Gweneth Lloyd, Jeanne Renaud, Francoise Sullivan, Nesta Toumine and Boris Volkoff.



Gweneth Lloyd getting ready to Tango with Encore! Encore! Producer Lawrence Adams.
photo: Marilyn Westlake

These choreographers only represent a portion of the work done by Canada's dance pioneers, but they demonstrate an awareness of the imperative need for an indigenous art form.

The aim of **Encore! Encore!** is to bring specific works of these six choreographers back to life, so that future generations have a living history of Canada's theatrical dance heritage.

We know that you will want to join us in celebrating these two decisive dance decades with, "**Encore! Encore!**".

**ENCORE! ENCORE! MEETS
ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE IN THE WEST**

Sonja Barton

I arrived in Toronto from Saskatoon in November to begin work on the fundraising for Encore! Encore!. My first month was spent organizing contacts and familiarizing myself with two years of research material on the choreographers.

On December 5th I was on a plane headed for Vancouver. On arrival, I contacted Virginia Cleary from the B.C. Touring Office who was extremely helpful and enthusiastic about the project.

I also had a meeting with Philip Keatley, CBC arts producer. Mr. Keatley was an invaluable source of information on the local art scene, past and present.

Nancy Morrison, prominent Vancouver attorney, put me in touch with writer and arts consultant Lana Underhill. Lana agreed to explore the possibility of setting up a local fundraising committee for the production and has acted as my Vancouver "general" since my return to Toronto. Through Lana I was able to contact Margaret Fleming, whose late husband, Robert Fleming, composed the score for Gweneth Lloyd's ballet "Shadow on the Prairie". On my final day in Vancouver I was able to meet with John Crompton, Manager and Special Projects Director of Expo '86. **Mr. Crompton's** imagination was fired by the production's theatrical possibilities and we spent a most exciting hour discussing. We have met with Mr. Crompton in Toronto and while details are not final, we hope to see Encore! Encore! opening in August '86 at Canada Place.

After three hectic days in Vancouver, I was off to Winnipeg. There, I met an old friend, Joy Cohenstaedt now Deputy Minister of Culture in the Manitoba government, and writer Christopher Dafoe.

At Lana's suggestion I contacted Brenda Leipsic with whom I discussed the prospects of mobilizing a fundraising group in Winnipeg. Brenda was a great help and has become my Winnipeg "general".

I was overwhelmed with the positive response to Encore! Encore! in the West and I look forward to my next visit in the spring.

Mid-February I held a small dinner party in Toronto with friends and supporters of the project. Guests included Arthur Gelber, long-time arts' supporter and former

Chairman of the Ontario Arts Council, Jean and Jeremy Riley, Eleanor and Barry Strayer, who were in town from Ottawa, Maxine Crook, Senior Editor of CBC's Arts Journal, Strachan Bongard, Paul Fleck, Director of the Banff Centre, Annette av Paul and Brian Macdonald.

For the next leg of my campaign, I am off to Ottawa and Montreal to mobilize the fundraising forces in these cities. More news in the next Bulletin.

**VALUABLE OTTAWA DANCE
COLLECTION THREATENED**

Thirty-seven years worth of carefully preserved sets, costumes, and records will soon be without a home. Nesta Toumine's studio in Ottawa is being closed and her storage rooms must be cleared.

The complete collection contains artifacts from Madame Toumine's ballets dating back to 1943. Included are the sets and costumes designed by her husband, Sviatoslav Toumine.

Preserving this irreplaceable collection will require making an inventory, selecting the most valuable material, finding a safe storage space and financing the move.

There have been tragedies in the past such as the two fires which wiped out the records of the Winnipeg Ballet, and destroyed much of Volkoff's work.

We are making every attempt to assure that this valuable part of our Canadian dance history is not lost.

**MILDRED WICKSON
PIONEER BALLET TEACHER**

Mildred Wickson, one of the pioneers of Canadian dance teaching, died in November, 1984. Well know within the dance community for over 50 years, Ms. Wickson was a dancer with Boris Volkoff's Canadian Ballet which performed in the 1936 Olympiad in Berlin.

She opened her own Toronto studio in 1940 and continued as a ballet teacher up until 1967, when she retired.

Always active in the dance community, Ms. Wickson was the first President of the Canadian Dance Teachers Association.

Among her students, Walter Foster, Lilian Jarvis and Katherine Stewart were early members of the National Ballet Company and Carole Chadwick is currently the Vice-Principal of the National Ballet School.

INTRODUCING THE HISTORICAL ADVISORS PANEL

We have asked writers, researchers, historians and former dancers to be part of an Historical Advisory Panel to Encore! Encore!. Many were active in the 30's and 40's. We would like to extend our thanks to them for their cooperation in acting as resource people for the project. To date included are:

Janet Baldwin	Casimir Carter
Cliff Collier	Betty Farrally
Rosemary Jeanes	Fraser MacDonald
Jillian Officer	Iro Tembeck
Lauretta Thistle	David Yeddeau
Leland Windreich	

JANET BALDWIN was among the first students and dancers of Boris Volkoff. She married Volkoff in 1936 when his Canadian dance group competed at the Olympics in Berlin. She is currently organizing the Volkoff collection in the Metropolitan Toronto Library

CASIMIR CARTER was one of the original dancers with the Winnipeg Ballet, and a dance reviewer for many years. He has collected a wealth of research material on the early days of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

CLIFF COLLIER is currently the Chairman of the Dance in Canada Forum on Resources, Research and Publication. He has done extensive research on dance and is a former dancer of the Volkoff Canadian Ballet.

BETTY FARRALLY came to Canada with Gweneth Lloyd in 1938 when they founded their ballet school in Winnipeg and eventually formed the Winnipeg Ballet. She taught, directed rehearsals, and performed with the Company for many years.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE LAIDLAW FOUNDATION

Encore! Encore! would like to acknowledge a generous donation of \$20,500 from the Laidlaw Foundation towards the project.

These funds enabled Encore! Encore! to carry out the extensive research phase of the project and assist in initiating the fundraising campaign.

A further private donation of \$5,000 will assist continued research and preparation of materials for the fundraising drive.

BRIAN MACDONALD HARRY FREEDMAN AND ENCORE! ENCORE!

Discussions are currently underway with Harry Freedman, to act as Musical Director and Brian Macdonald, to act as Director of Choreography for Encore! Encore!.

Brian has a long list of choreographic and directorial credits. He has worked in Canada, Europe and the U.S.A. with major dance companies.

Currently he is the Associate Director at the Stratford Festival and Director of dance at the Banff Centre for Fine Arts.

At this time Brian is directing a St. Patrick's Day Gala Performance in Quebec City for the PMO's Office on the occasion of the visit of US President Reagan. The performance will be telecast live by the CBC on March 17.

Harry Freedman is a well known Canadian composer who wrote his first dance score in 1955 for Nancy Lima-Dent's "Dark Cry". He has been active in the Canadian Music Centre for many years and has written for television and film productions.

He wrote his first Symphony in 1960 and has been commissioned to write pieces for several Canadian orchestras. He has contributed three dance scores to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

BANFF CENTRE UNDER DISCUSSION FOR RESTAGING

Dr. Paul Fleck, Director of the Banff Centre for Fine Arts was recently in Toronto and we took the opportunity to speak to him about the project and in particular about the possibility of using the Banff Centre facilities for the restaging phase of Encore! Encore!.

Plans call for bringing the choreographers and the original dancers together in April and May of 1986 to reconstruct the dance pieces that will be used in the Encore! Encore! performances.

This will also be the first time that all the artists are together and the occasion will be used to pay tribute to these choreographers for their lasting contribution to Canadian dance.

More on this later.

**FRASER MCDONALD -
THE IMAGE OF BALLET
ON CANADIAN RADIO**

Janet Kuzniar

Before the dawn of television, CBC radio was at the hearth of every home. For most Canadians, the public image of ballet was the voice of Fraser McDonald and his weekly radio programme "The Ballet Club" featuring a selection of music written for ballet.



Fraser remembers those days when dancers Ruth Carse, Mildred Herman (Melissa Hayden) and Patricia Drylie were studying with him at Boris Volkoff's ballet school in Toronto; when Gweneth Lloyd interviewed Martha Graham on his radio programme; when he was given the opportunity to perform because Volkoff had lost a male dancer to army service; wartime hysteria, and the CBC regulation that all programmes had to be scripted to guard against spy activity. Fortunately, these scripts provide some trace of that most ephemeral art, dance.

Fraser McDonald was born in Toronto and grew up in Edmonton. He returned to Toronto to study music at The Conservatory with John Weinzweig. He began working with the CBC in the early 40's in the record library and writing continuity. By 1948 Fraser was not only writing but became the voice of "The

Ballet Club". The show ran for 18 years.

The first time that a full evening ballet performance was broadcast live by the CBC was in 1949 from the 2nd Canadian Ballet Festival in Toronto. Fraser was there providing live commentary from backstage at the Royal Alexandra Theatre. Two original Canadian musical scores were introduced at that performance - John Weinzweig's "Red Ear of Corn" written for Boris Volkoff, and Walter Kaufmann's "Visage", choreographed by Gweneth Lloyd.

On "The Ballet Club", Fraser would play recordings of ballet music and illustrate the music with descriptions of the ballets. He was the educational voice to a nation that was new to dance. He translated ballet jargon into non-balletomine language. He reported extensively on international and Canadian dance news and although he was free to make personal comments about any performance, he generally refrained from criticism. He fully realized that words could sound harsher and more authoritative on the air than they were intended to be.

Representing a visual performance solely through an aural medium has phenomenal limitations, yet in a vast and relatively uncultivated land, a ballet audience was growing through the sounds of CBC radio and Fraser McDonald.

NEXT ISSUE:-

A look at Volkoff's Canadian Ballet at the Berlin Olympics; an interview with David Yeddeau and an update from Ottawa and Montreal plus more news.

Encore! Encore! BULLETIN
145 George Street,
Toronto, M5A 2M6