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growth of
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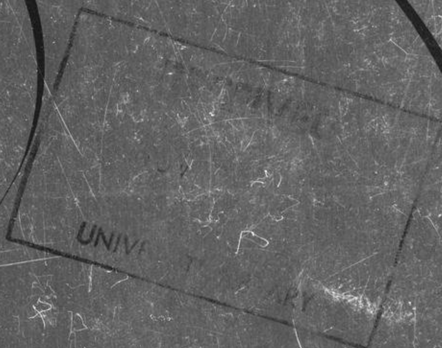
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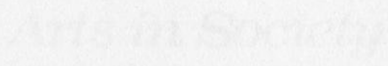

growth of Dance in america

Arts in Society

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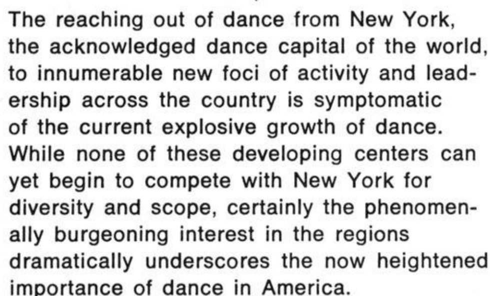
The reaching out of dance from New York, the acknowledged dance capital of the world, to innumerable new foci of activity and leadership across the country is symptomatic of the current explosive growth of dance. While none of these developing centers can yet begin to compete with New York for diversity and scope, certainly the phenomenally burgeoning interest in the regions dramatically underscores the now heightened importance of dance in America.



This number, planned in cooperation with the Wisconsin Dance Council,* seeks to highlight the selected issues that are of particular importance to understanding both the present state and future needs of dance as a developing force in American culture.

A major concern of the writers is the question of dance literacy: more and better writing and scholarship; developing conceptual methodologies for the study of dance; combatting the anti-intellectualism that seems to surround our present approaches to dance; overcoming limited access to research materials; the uses, possibilities, and limits of formal notation systems and such technological developments as video tape in the tasks of preserving dance and augmenting its future creative development. The almost inherent evanescence of dance has constituted its largest stumbling block!

Another concern is the place of dance in colleges and universities. It began its career in academe in departments of physical education, largely through the pioneering efforts of Margaret H'Doubler, who inaugurated the first university dance major at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1926, after ten years of experimenting with a method for making dance a vehicle for education. H'Doubler, who believed in the idea of dance for everyone, saw performance as a refinement of movement learning that encompassed the participation of all. The philosophy of dance education that evolved from the work of H'Doubler and her students has tended to

*Special thanks are due to those Council members—Curtis Carter, Karen Cowan, Diane Pruett and Virginia Weiler—who led and coordinated the collaborative effort.

emerging possibilities and promise of dance

define the role of dance in the university as a form of physical education, and as a creative movement activity for all. Subsequently, dance studies in the universities have improved technical training through greater contact with professional dancers, and these have contributed their share of fine dance teachers and a number of outstanding artists to the profession. Today, there are widely diverse philosophies of dance education, and university dance programs are now pulled in many directions: whether to provide for the growing demand for dance as a part of general education, to train aspiring performers, to prepare future teachers of dance, or to take up the tasks of research and the training of dance scholars—or all of these! These tugs place demands on dance faculties that few if any are prepared to meet. It is particularly evident that no existing university dance program is equipped with an adequate staff and resources to meet the challenge of what universities best do: to contribute to scholarly knowledge and to train future dance scholars for work in criticism, history, aesthetics, philosophy, and other theoretical studies of dance.

A related and even larger question is that of dance as a form of education. Because both public and private agencies are increasingly concerned with enhancing and extending the educational usefulness of the arts, many people are asking what will be the role of dance in these coming developments. Since educational institutions at all levels control major resources for funding and for audience development through teaching and performance of dance, it seems clear that they will steadily emerge as a major force in the future growth of dance. Their sponsorship of dance residencies and their participation in the artist-in-the-schools program already makes them a principal factor. Continuing cooperation between dancers and educational institutions cannot but hold enormous promise, and particularly for regional development.

In fact, the growing process of regionalization threads through almost all of the articles in the issue as a persistently hopeful theme. Important questions are raised: What has been the role of the dance touring residencies and other such national efforts in the stimulation of a nation-wide interest in dance? Is the action, in fact, now shifting to the regions? What is the potential for developing innovative contributions in the regions, as opposed to mere transplants of what is happening in New York? How can the roles of community and professional dance organizations best be orchestrated in the future growth of dance? Exemplary of the emerging strength of regional dance is the fact that leadership and planning for this issue have come from the Wisconsin Dance Council, a pioneering statewide organization dedicated to the promotion of dance as a fine art.

It is noteworthy that what is especially affirmed by the articles and pieces that have been brought together here is not the old parochialisms in dance—whether New York or other than New York based—but rather the new visions of possibility that are fully national in scope. Visions of such size must presage an exciting future for dance in America. □

Dance Literacy

by Deborah Jowitt
Dance critic for the New York Times.

Shortly after my first piece of dance criticism—a review of Paul Taylor's **Agathe's Tale**—appeared in the **Village Voice,** I received two illuminating bits of feedback. One was a letter from Paul Taylor. He was perturbed because I had first quoted something he reportedly said to another critic about what he had been trying to do in **Agathe's Tale,** and had then attacked his dance because it didn't conform to my interpretation of this dubious conversation. Taylor pointed out very politely that I appeared to have seen his dance very clearly myself, so why didn't I just trust my own eyesight and not worry about what anyone else said was supposed to be going on.

The other comment came from Diane Fisher, my editor at the **Voice.** She said that it would be nice if, next time, I could talk more about the movement, since that was what dancing was all about, wasn't it?

I've now spent eight years following up the implications of those first reactions to my work, and there is no end in sight.

I knew right away the kind of criticism I admired and wanted to write and the kinds I considered less useful—although in 1967 I couldn't have articulated the difference clearly. I saw the problem as one of distance. Possibly because I was also functioning as a dancer and a choreographer, I didn't want to stand outside the art—much less above it looking down, with the slightly patronizing air some critics adopt. I aspired instead to be an impetuous voice talking about dancing in an interesting, accurate, unauthoritative way. I was pleased to find that Edwin Denby, whom I admired, had written, "It seems to me that it is not a critic's historic function to have right opinions, but to have interesting ones."

Of course, many editors, many readers, and many critics see the critic as a barometer that registers artistic worth: if his thumb turns down, the public stays home, smug in the belief that it isn't wasting good money or being contaminated by bad art. The problem is, how can the inevitably personal reactions of anyone—even a Cultural Giant—be considered reliable as a measuring device for setting a work in some forevermore correct position in a hierarchy of values?

And God save us from the critic who carries this position to extremes by considering his own opinions so notable that he needn't back them up with any supporting evidence gleaned from the dance performance in question.

a private view of criticism

How demeaning to his readers to imply that all they need to know about a work is whether he liked it or not! This paternalism, I think, reinforces the notion that art is "difficult" and something you have to be taught to appreciate; you begin to worry that you may enjoy a piece of inferior art, as if this were a social gaffe akin to drinking the water in your finger bowl. I remember with horror those ads for an art appreciation course that featured reproductions of a pretty piece of salon art and a particularly harsh Cubist portrait by Picasso, with the threatening question, "Which of these do you prefer?" (or maybe it was, "Which of these is great art?")—the assumption being that if you liked the salon art, you needed the course badly, and if you liked the Picasso, you'd want to know more about your remarkable good taste.

So I realized that—though I didn't mean to refrain from acknowledging that I loved or loathed a particular dance—I didn't aspire to be a tastemaster or to precondition audiences to think of a work as "major" or "minor" so that they could (as Edwin Denby described the desired effects of those old-fangled poetry appreciation courses) "prepare themselves for a major reaction or a minor one." Nor did I want to think as if I were a publicist for dance, although I resigned myself somewhat to being used as one. I didn't want to play teacher either—to artists or public—not only because such a stance was presumptuous, but because I detested the priggish tone that often accompanies it. ("Miss X should avoid attempting such ambitious dances until she has learned the rudiments of choreography.")

If criticism is educative, it is so in the Socratic sense. For those who have seen the dance being discussed, it may articulate responses they themselves had. For those who haven't seen the dance, it may give information or arouse curiosity. And especially fine dance-writing can certainly stimulate new ways of seeing and thinking about a work. For instance, here is Arlene Croce, writing in **The New Yorker** about Patricia McBride and a fragment of a pas de deux from Balanchine's **Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet:**

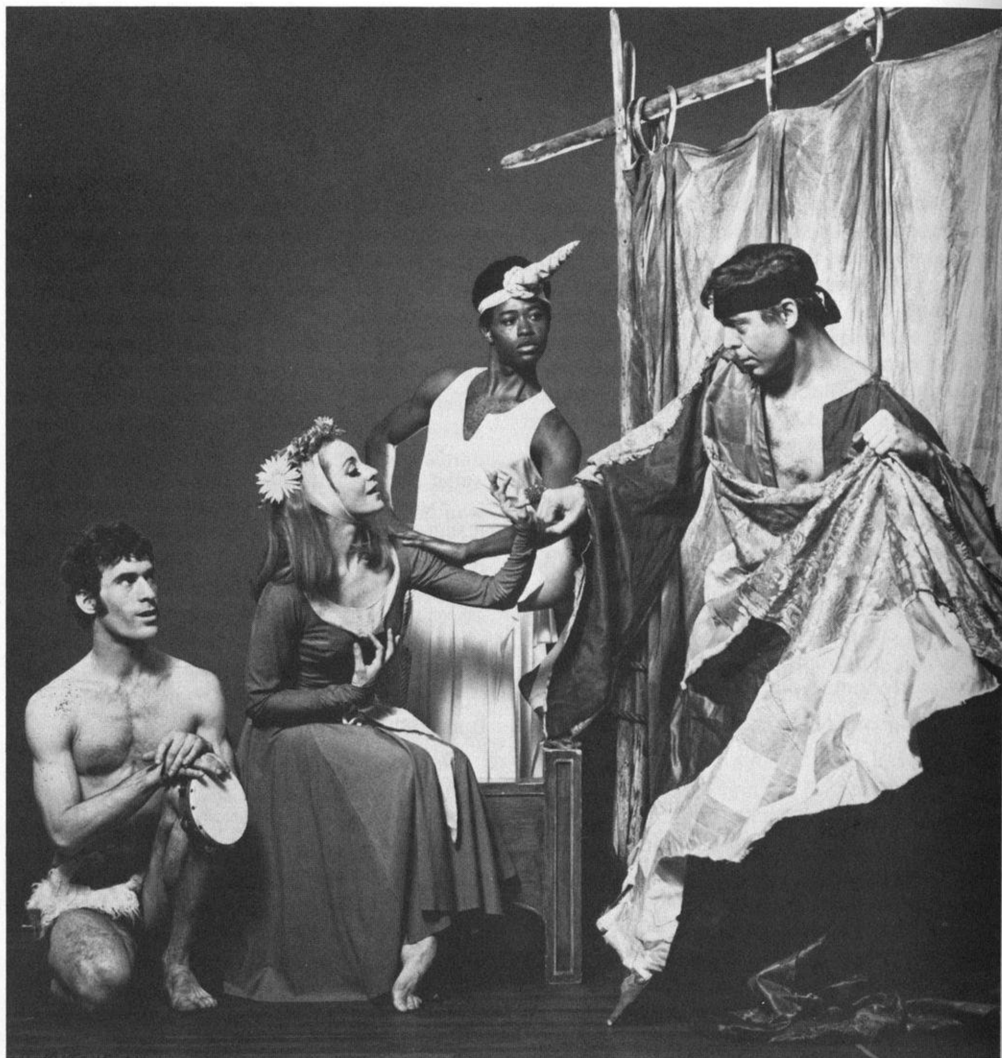
> *The Intermezzo unfurls in a continuous line indistinguishable from the line of McBride's body; the dance just seems to grow out of the curve of her deeply indented lower back and to shape itself voluntarily in a series of unarrested scroll-like plunges. Over and over she plummets and returns on herself—up through his hands, behind his shoulders, or caught on his chest—and each time the recovery seems to fix both of them momentarily in a new condition, a new intimacy.*

Not only does Croce's description bring a moment of dance vividly to mind, but she presents us with her intuition of the emotional and physical forces that make wonderful dancing so profound.

And here is what Ellen Jacobs wrote in **Changes** about William Dunas' **I Went With Him and She Came with Me** about the experience of watching a man walk back and forth across a room for over an hour:

Our eyes are riveted to every bit of movement. Every detail is crucial or loudly important. A snake of light wedges its way between heel and sole and sole and toe of his shoe. Each step crushes it; each new one provides another birth . . . He creates violence in me . . . The only escape is personal fantasy.

It seems to me invaluable to have people writing about unconventional dance in this direct and observant way. Ballet, essentially, is easy to like, but much of the new dance



is capable of baffling and boring and infuriating audiences, since it violates the expectations set up by the theatrical traditions of centuries. Better to deal honestly with the feelings it arouses than to dismiss it in snooty journalese: "Mr. Dunas did nothing but walk for an hour, and this critic could hardly refrain from walking out."

What I've come to believe is that the best dance criticism (at any rate, the dance criticism I admire most) stays intimately connected to the work itself—neither leaping over it into romantic fancies or distant theorizing, nor smothering it in irrelevant ideas, nor making it the pretext for a brilliant display of temperament. This idea hardly sounds radical, but you have to remember that most of the dance criticism in this country has—with the exception of that published in professional magazines—appeared in daily newspapers. Since there were very few professional dance critics, or editors willing to hire them, dance writing was handled by staff reporters or music critics or drama critics or sportswriters. Small wonder that more space has been given in print to a dance's costumes, decor, music, plot, to the dancers' appearance, technical wizardry, muscular effort than to what characterizes a particular dancer, dance style, ballet, choreographer.

Why have I couched the above in the past tense? Many editors still don't consider dance an art worth serious attention. Yet I detect a slow change for the better. We are (in case you hadn't heard) in the middle of a dance boom. This doesn't necessarily mean better dance, but it does mean more dance, and more people who want to see it and read about it. And more people eager to write about it—whether as aestheticians, historians, biographers, interviewers, feature writers, or critics. Inevitably all this activity nudges some editor or other into a new gear. For instance, a couple of years ago, **The New Yorker** hired Arlene Croce, having done without a dance critic since its beginnings. Nancy Goldner writes regularly for **The Nation.** The underground or alternative papers have been unusually receptive: New York's **Soho Weekly News** now publishes as many as four articles on dance in one issue. **Minnesota Daily,** a college paper with alternative paper clout, often gives Allen Robertson a two-page spread for dance. And fortunately the whole business seems to be slightly contagious. When trendy **New York Magazine** finally broke down and published several articles on dance, including one by Marcia Siegel—one of the most notable contemporary critics—a hard-pressed writer from the Deep South said that her editor was so impressed that he has stopped butchering her own dance reviews.

It's also encouraging that many of the newspaper writers who've been forced to add dance coverage to their chore list are taking the responsibility seriously. An intensive summer seminar in dance criticism, founded in 1970 by Selma Jeanne Cohen, has functioned ever since—courtesy of Connecticut College's American Dance Festival and the National Endowment for the Arts. Marcia Siegel has been directing a similar program on the West coast. Now there's even a National Association of Dance Critics.

Getting a bunch of dance critics together inevitably spawns discussions of methods and problems (along with the inevitable gripes about editorial insensitivity and lack of space). To me, one of the crucial factors is perception. Seeing. Not all the erudition in the world seems able to make up for a deficiency in this area. But, since each dance imposes its own conditions, you can't learn What To Look For In Dance, you can only try to get better at noticing what's there to be noticed. The process has less to do with good eyesight than it does with recognizing what you've seen. Quite a few critics have found that experiencing movement can help you to "see" it more easily. This doesn't mean studying dance necessarily, but in some way feeling qualities like lightness or quickness, by moving in flat planes perhaps or making spiral paths.

We all have our favorite ways of organizing perception—some of which may be inimical to a particular choreographer's style. If you ask a group of people to describe from memory everything they can remember about a room they've just examined, you find that, not only have they all noticed different things, but each has ordered the material differently. One may define the architectural space first; another may group furniture in families

Agathe's Tale, Paul Taylor, choreographer and company; (l to r) D. Williams, E. Cropley, E. Morgan, P. Taylor.

according to function. One may notice color first, another textures. One may begin at the door and describe each thing he came upon as he walked through the room. Another may add appraisals (That cord needs replacing; it looks like leather, but it's really plastic) or discuss the atmosphere in terms of coziness or elegance. There are inescapable truths, just as there are about dancing—either that chair has arms or it doesn't, either the woman entered first or the man did; but the point is, which ones do you note as being important if you're trying to get at the essence of a particular room or dance? And how do you weigh your own perceptual predilections? Often the process involves understanding and analyzing a purely instinctive response and relating it accurately to what you've seen.

Do Twyla Tharp's dances strike you as chaotic and sloppy or as complicated and casual? Both responses might be produced by the free trajectory of the movements she makes up—her style rarely contains the end-stopped poses that ballet has conditioned us to, and the dancing just keeps spiralling and shaking through every part of the dancers' bodies—or by the fact that everyone isn't doing the same thing at the same time. Watching a dance, you may have to postpone certain decisions until the piece has ended, but there are others you can make on the spot. You can tell right away, for example, that Bill Dunas is capable of walking for over an hour, that Merce Cunningham's dancers are seldom going to be in unison, that Balanchine is obviously attached to symmetrical mirror formations for his corps de ballet. Facts like these instantly begin to influence your feeling that the event is "minimal," "unpredictable," "formal" or—on another level—"boring," "disorganized," "cold."

And once you've "seen" a dance and thought about what you saw and felt, you have to figure out—often alarmingly quickly—how to write about it. Obviously you try to use words vividly, but even here there's a trap. If your language is too flashy, your article may turn opaque and readers will get hung up on its glittering surface instead of seeing through it to the dance it's supposed to be about. On one hand you have to avoid bogging down in blow-by-blow descriptions that you've forgotten to relate to some picture of the whole; and on the other hand, you've got to try to keep from flying off into fanciful interpretations of "meaning," which can also obscure rather than illumine.

I like reading critics who let you in on the ground floor and tell you some of those simple things you sometimes need to know—what you see when the curtain goes up, or what certain dancers look like. Edwin Denby has left some indelible descriptions: Toumanova ". . . with her large, handsome, and deadly face, her swordlike toesteps, her firm positions, her vigorous and record-high leg gestures." Laura Shapiro, now writing for the **Boston Globe,** provided this irresistible image of Murray Louis, showing off his supple body:

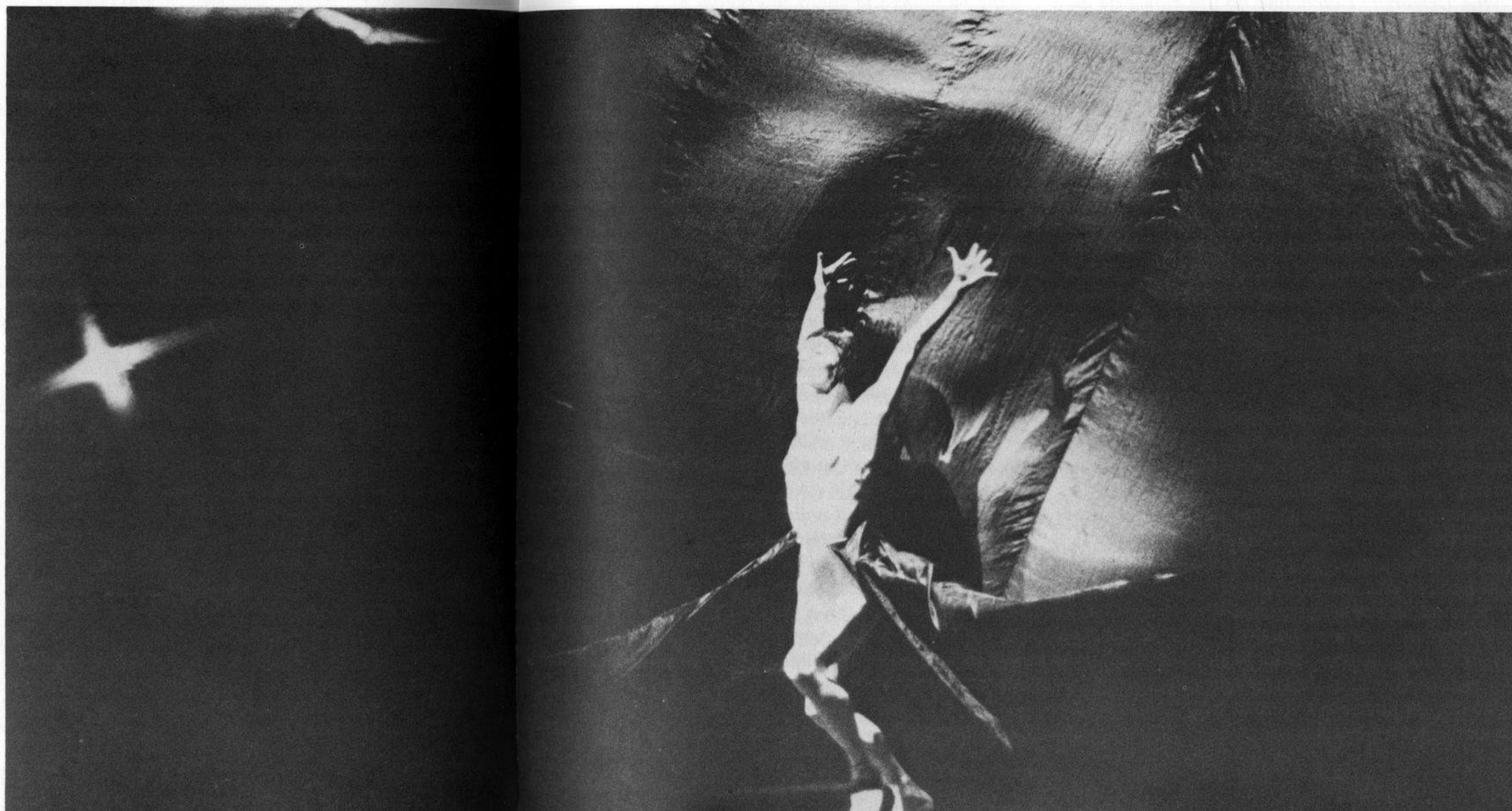
> *like a housewife with a new kitchen, every little dial and switch activating something sudden and impressive. Quick shifts of weight, spontaneous rebounds from one extremity to the next, the twitch of a shoulder or a knee, these charge him with a recurrent flow of power . . .*

Most of the critics I've quoted share the attribute of specificity. They talk—plainly or elaborately—about dancers dancing. They're the sort who'll say "the dancers walked in single file across the stage," rather than, "a horizontal progression occurred." Their verbs tend to be active and their adjectives and adverbs pungent. They don't dicker around with press-agents' dream remarks like "The facile and expert Mr. Y danced with the incomparable mastery we've come to expect from him."

Vivid and precise and accurate descriptions of dancing become all the more important when you consider that today's dance criticism is tomorrow's dance history. As Selma Jeanne Cohen once noted in exasperation, certain words—especially judgemental words—have different connotations at different periods in history. Wading through reviews of early twentieth century ballet, she found that dancers were often characterized only as "elegant" or "graceful," and that this puny evidence proved surprising when compared to a rare snippet of film of the period: "They praised as 'simple purity' what we now consider 'fussy'—broken wrists, raised shoulders, softly bent knees, coy inclinations of the head."

I don't want anyone to think that I don't advocate massive reading or that I don't treasure dance scholarship. I do. But I love the short-lived fact of dancing more, and I feel a responsibility to say something about that fact. The history of dance criticism has been so erratic that we haven't developed vocabularies, formulas, techniques; at this point we have no excuse for not confronting the immediacy, the sensuality, the illusion of spontaneous human motion that are so integral to dance.

I'll make only three more dogmatic remarks about non-dogmatic criticism: objectivity is a myth, power trips are evil, insensitive editors are a pain in the ass. □



Variations Pour Une Porte Et Un Soupir, George Balanchine, choreographer. Dancer: Karin von Aroldingen, New York City Ballet.

by Curtis L. Carter

A Professor of Philosophy and Chairman of the University Committee on the Fine Arts at Marquette University, he is deeply involved in the dance field as a writer and critic. Currently he is a member of the National Executive Committee of the American Dance Guild, and serves as Chairman of the Wisconsin Dance Council.

I.

At present a conceptual plague besets at all levels the understanding of dance as an art form. It is grounded in a misguided separation of sensibility from intelligence. Sensibility includes physical motor impulses and action and the feelings these are intended to express; intelligence refers to notions of formal structure, analysis, interpretation of meaning, and reasoning that lead to theoretical studies of dance. According to those dancers, writers, and educators who separate sensibility from intelligence, dance is an art of sensibility. The choreographing of dances, their performance, and their perception by viewers consist, accordingly, of physical-emotive processes in which the intellectual factors that generate aesthetics, philosophy, and theory can be neglected without significant loss. This one-sided approach surrounds dance with an unfortunate aura of anti-intellectualism, and dance suffers correspondingly as those genuinely interested in the arts are led to regard dance as inferior in kind and in significance to art forms whose intellectual components are not so neglected. Dance is thus regarded as unworthy to be given space in the cultural pantheon occupied by such universally recognized art forms as poetry, music, and painting.

The image problem for dance is not new. Crato, a character in the Greek satirist Lucian's dialogue on dance, mouths the skeptical view:

> *Who that is a man at all, a lifelong friend of letters, moreover conversant with philosophy, abandons his interest, Lycinus, in all that is better . . . to sit enthralled by the flute, watching a girlish fellow play the wanton with dainty clothing and bawdy songs and imitate love-sick minxes, the most erotic of all antiquity . . . a ridiculous business in all truth . . .*[1]

For more complex philosophical reasons Hegel, writing in the nineteenth century, excludes dance by name from the list of "essential" arts (architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry);—he relegates it, in fact, to the category of imperfect arts, along with such other genteel forms of human leis-

intelligence and sensibility in the dance

ure as gardening.[2] And contemporary understanding of dance continues to exhibit a similar anti-intellectualism. The reluctance of many colleges and universities to consider dance a serious academic concern, and the relative neglect of dance in elementary and secondary school curricula, reflect the comparatively low image of dance in contemporary cultural life.

Now there is no particular merit in making dance intellectually respectable merely for the sake of modifying an undesirable cultural image unless, of course, something important is lost by the present sensibility emphasis. I believe there are significant losses. In the first place, choreographers and dancers do not receive their due recognition as contributors of significant forms of human creative expression. Their contribution to others through performance and participation in movement experiences is impaired because the audiences and participants lack balanced awareness of both sensible and intellectual aspects of dance that are necessary to its full appreciation. Other issues are also at stake: The preparation of choreographers and dancers, in both professional company schools and in university dance programs, hovers uneasily in a tenuous and often directionless state and falls short of meeting personal and professional-artistic needs in practically every case. The use of dance as a form of general education is equally inhibited by the failure of dance educators to integrate the intellectual aspects of dance with the physical. The scholarly investigation of the intellectual aspects of dance, and the establishing of dance as a recognized field of study also suffer from neglect due to the exclusive emphasis upon sensibility.

The popularity of dance is in the ascendant today, as we all regularly and joyfully remind ourselves. This phenomenon is both the cause and the result of increased writing about dance. The current wave of popularity that dance enjoys makes it all the more urgent that new viewers and old ones receive encouragement and support from a corresponding surge in the quality and quantity of scholarly literature and educational programs augmenting the raw dance experience with aesthetic and philosophical concepts. Without such support, the rise in the popularity of dance will undoubtedly remain on a superficial level. The "boom" might indeed boomerang into a setback for dance because popular taste has a tendency—fatal for art—to atrophy at the level of familiar, entertaining, and easily grasped images. Moreover, without a deepening of audience experience through the development of both the intellectual and sensible aspects of dance, it could become

increasingly more difficult to support the less popular experimental frontiers of dance. Twyla Tharp's statement, "I've survived inattention. I hope to God I survive attention,"[3] is as applicable to the future of all of dance as it is to her own work.

I have been careful to state the importance of both the physical-emotive and the intellectual aspects of dance; no one should therefore accuse me of opting for a strictly intellectual or conceptualist approach to this art. The physical-emotive aspects of dance are not in question; they are essential. If I appear to emphasize the intellectual here it is only because that side of dance so frequently remains unexplored, and is nevertheless desperately in need of spokesmen. My purpose here is to examine both generally and with particular attention to dance aesthetics, philosophy, and theory the implications of the divorcement of sensibility from intelligence. Dance, as I will understand it here, includes all forms of the art that are designed for performance by trained dancers, or by non-dancers who act according to the directions of an artist-choreographer, and also includes certain creative movement-experiences intended for participation rather than for performance. The essay will support and defend the notion that both sensibility and intelligence are necessary and complementary features that function in all aspects of dance, including choreography, performance, participatory educational dance, as well as in the experiences a viewer undergoes while absorbing a performance. Creators, participants, and viewers each apply intelligence respectively to the making, doing, and perceiving of dances. The choreographer translates ideas into movement patterns, the participants in dance classes experience the created order of the dance with their minds as well as with their bodies. Viewers, on the other hand, perceive the formal patterns of the dance and symbolic meanings, while experiencing its physical-kinesthetic and emotive aspects. Approaches to dance that deal only with the physical-emotive aspects of dance are therefore, incomplete, and those who present dance from this limited perspective must take responsibility for the poor cultural image of dance, for the incompleteness of dance experience that lacks intellectual content, for deficiencies in dance education, and for the arrested development of dance research and scholarship.

II.

Before turning directly to the implications of the present split between sensibility and intelligence for theoretical writings on dance, which includes dance aesthetics, philosophy, and theory, I would like to consider briefly the background and reasons for that split. The principal factor in the background is a half-truth deriving from a selective focus on the physical-emotive aspects of dance. This "half-truth" asserts that dance takes the physical-motor impulses of the human body and the stirrings of undifferentiated feeling states as its medium. This claim, while true, is only a half-truth because it omits the essential fact that no dance as art would exist at all if there were not a creative-analytical mind at work selecting and shaping the physical impulses and feelings according to an idea or a concept. In his discussion of Isadora Duncan's method for creating dance, John Martin refers to these initial stages of physical impulse and feeling as "vague and inspirational" sources of dance.[4] At this stage we do not yet have dance. Intelligence must relate the physical impulses and feelings into the meaningful patterns and symbols and must correlate movement with music, lighting, costumes, and sets. Today's dancers also integrate computer and video technology into their works. Such acts of intelligent selection are not adequately covered in a discussion of dance as physical-emotive movement.

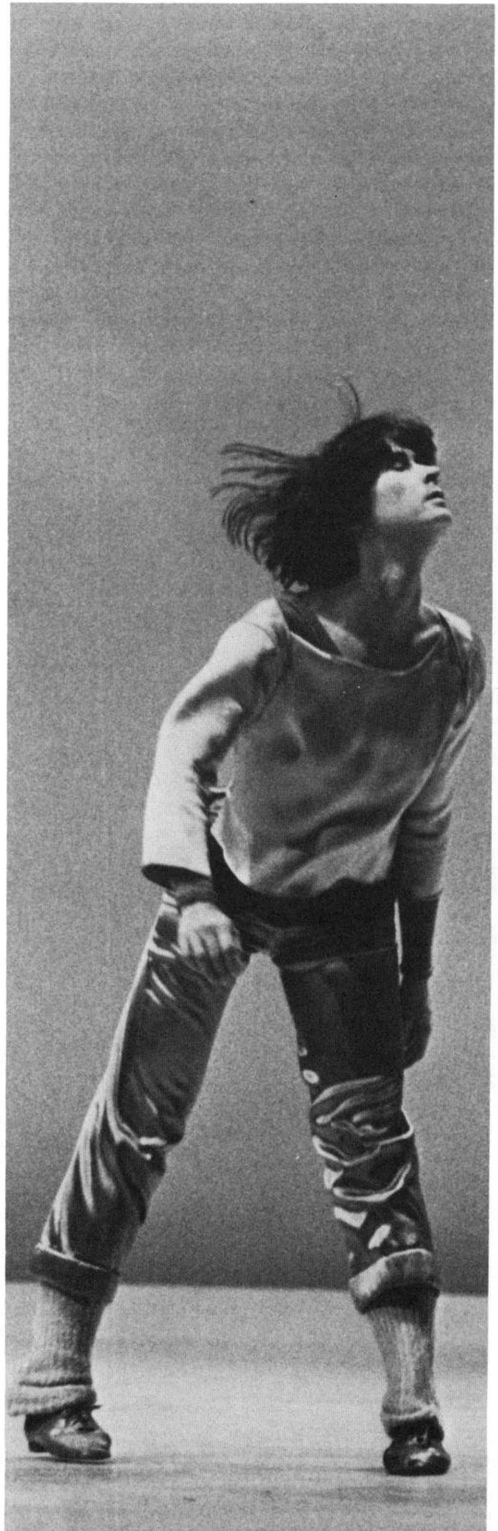
The reasons, as well as the background, for the division of sensibility from intelligence, and for the accompanying second class status of dance in the general concept of arts and culture, are complex. They go far deeper than aversion from the physical-bodily aspects of human experience, or than mere snobbery. These reasons rise out of a series of misunderstandings that combine with the previously mentioned half-truth that dance is a physical-emotive art. I will examine critically some of the more important considerations here, for the purpose of showing their ineffectiveness as reasons to justify the separation of sensibility from intelligence, and to clear the way for properly integrating these elements in future discussions of dance.

One unavoidable factor contributing to the unexamined separation of sensibility from intelligence is the very absence of a tradition of concern with such questions among

choreographers and dancers themselves. The question of how sensibility and intelligence function in dance is philosophical in nature, and—to my knowledge—it simply has not been discussed on that level. The practitioners and critics of dance who have shown *some* concern for dance theory have in their theory, given exclusive importance to the physical-emotive aspects while virtually ignoring the intellectual.

A related circumstance contributing to the separation of sensibility from intelligence is the fact that for many people dance lacks an independent identity; and it has been considered an adjunct of other arts like music and drama, or as a part of physical education, rather than as an entity in its own right. Library journals classify dance in the category of sport, and dance periodicals are located in the music index. Colleges and universities, moreover, remain uncertain what place dance should occupy in the curriculum. For historical reasons it has been assigned to physical education departments, and now the trend is to place it with drama or music, in a school of fine arts. But no clear identity for dance as an independent area of art or of study emerges in these processes. The identity problem for dance is an ancient problem too: Demetrius the Cynic typifies the skeptical view of the identity of dance when he denounces dance as a mere adjunct to music and silk vestments, consisting of meaningless, idle movements with no sense at all. Upon hearing Demetrius' denunciation, a dancer is said to have stopped the music and proceeded to give a performance of the loves of Aphrodite and Ares, using movement alone; so convincing was he that Demetrius shouted at the top of his lungs, "I hear the story you are acting, man, I do not just see it . . ."[5]

The rationale that supports the division of sensibility from intelligence in dance often includes the belief that dance, by its physical-emotive nature, is the antithesis of abstract intellectual activity. Such thinking, I believe, operates on the mistaken assumption that abstractions do not apply to dance. This error is a principal source of confusion in the understanding of dance. Abstractions function in dance, just as they do in other forms



Sue's Leg, Twyla Tharp, choreographer. Courtesy: WNET, **Dance in America,** N.Y.

of expression. The formalist choreography of such Balanchine works as "Jewels" cannot be fully appreciated apart from its conceptual structure of form. Anthony Tudor's theatrical realism in the ballet "Pillars of Fire," though suggesting episodes from "real life," is successful precisely because it is an abstraction of the human experience of stifling Puritanism in conflict with human desire. The dance is compelling because it abstracts essential elements to make a point that would not be possible to make by simply placing an event from "real life" on the stage. Every developed dance style, moreover, including ballet and modern dance, is based upon a set of abstract principles that help to explain the choreography. Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and others all build their approaches to dance on abstract theories concerning the uses of the human body for realizing art. Such principles are not used mindlessly or mechanically, and the styles of each choreographer change and grow. But underlying such developments of dance styles are abstract principles that can be articulated as a syntax of the various movement styles. The abstract principles which comprise the various styles are there to be articulated verbally for anyone with perceptual and verbal skills. These examples, though they do not constitute definitive arguments, are sufficient to show that the absence of abstraction does not provide the grounds for separating sensibility from intelligence in dance. The absence of abstraction therefore fails to distinguish dance from activities that are recognized to have intellectual as well as sensible characteristics.

Underlying the confusion regarding abstraction is a related confusion on the nature of intelligence. If we are to discuss the relation between sensibility and intelligence in dance, we must not limit the notion of intelligence to mere verbal understanding. It is an error, as Edwin Denby has said, to suppose that dance intelligence is necessarily the same as verbal intelligence.[6] But it is an even greater misconception to suppose that because the primary medium of dance is physical movement, intelligence is lacking. Throughout this essay I have stressed the fact that intelligence gives

The Mooche, Estelle Spurlock, Alvin Ailey Dance Co. Photo by Johan Elbers.

dance its formal structure and its symbolic meanings through the operation of creative and interpretive cognitive processes. Today we cannot even say, as Denby once did, that verbal intelligence is entirely separable from dance, because choreographers from Doris Humphrey to Trisha Brown and beyond continue to experiment with combinations of words and movements in their dances. In short, no substantial argument can be advanced to support the too-common assumption that dance is an art form in which intelligence plays no role. On the contrary, the post-modern choreographers such as Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Steve Paxton, and others *require* that the knowledgeable viewer take account of the intellectual concepts upon which their dances are constructed.

III.

The remaining two sections of this paper will examine the implications of the separation of sensibility from intelligence for writing about dance. Too much talk about the physical-feeling aspects of the dance has obscured the issue of writing about dance. There are undoubtedly some who feel that any attempt to write about so physical an activity as dance would be wasteful, worthless activity. Why write about dance at all? There are several answers that can be given to this. First, people want to, enjoy, and are determined to write about dance. This fact alone should tell us something of the importance of dance writing. For it cannot be that writers simply plunge into this very difficult work merely for the exercise. The remuneration scale, the attitude of editors, and the attitude of the general public do not support a strong interest in dance writing and scholarship. But, the difficulty of the task, the lack of pay and places to publish have not deterred a growing number of writers from writing about dance. It must be that people write about dance because they believe that the activity, however yet undefined as to methods, is necessary. The investment of relatively unrewarded time and creative effort itself places a value on the activity that cannot be ignored.

But there are other reasons for writing about dance. Writing is a fundamental way in which societies such as ours incorporate important activities and experiences as a part of the on-going culture. If dance is the oldest art form as tradition claims, it behooves those interested in the welfare of dance to take greater care to see that dance is incorporated effectively into present-day cultures. This incorporation must occur not only through the channels of visual-bodily memory as it is passed from one dancer to another, but by means of writing as well. Obviously writing is not the only means available for preserving the experience of dance. Film and video tape, together with photographs, offer the means for providing more accurate recording of dance movement. But these media have not, nor do I think they ever will, replace words as a means of preserving and fostering the developments of culture. They do not measure in the same breadth and depth as do words the *human personalized response* to dance. Video tape and film moreover at their present stage of development are incapable of providing a vehicle for the precise articulation of theoretical concepts and their analysis that words can provide. We should not be misled therefore by the availability of these media for providing us with physical facts. Facts require interpretation that is articulated best in words. It is incumbent upon those of us who care about dance to carry on the present surge of interest in writing about the dance. In support of the continuation of writing on dance it is worthwhile to recall John Martin's words, written for **Theatre Arts Monthly** in 1934:

> *To get one's dancing from the printed page is at best a makeshift delight, and yet the scope of dance so far exceeds the scope of any individual's powers of participation that to neglect the printed page is to forfeit many of the rewards of the dance. Indeed, even such dancing as can be captured in one's present moments lacks much of its potential quality if it is viewed without illumination of that background which lives alone in books.*[7]

On the other side of the issue, there are problems to be dealt with. The natural distrust that choreographers and dancers hold for all writing that attempts to reduce their work to words, for example, hinders the advance of writing on dance by raising doubts about the credibility of the writing. Suspicion of this kind is understandable to a degree, since the writer cannot possibly present in words the full experience of the dance as the choreographer or the dancer envisions it. Dance writers themselves exhibit considerable distrust of one another, putting aside the natural suspicions that choreographers and dancers share

for writing about their art. Critics regularly question the credibility of their peers and sometimes hold them in contempt. They are universally skeptical of aesthetics, philosophy, and theory as well as anthropology and history, because all of these forms of writing are removed from the direct experience of dance by an intervening conceptual framework.

Skepticism has been directed against the whole attempt at research or reflective writing by some critics. This sentiment is expressed in the remarks of the critic Martin Gottfried, who is addressing the 1969 CORD Conference on dance research:

> *I think—I'll tell you I'm very prejudiced against research. I don't think we really could ever get along, because I think the whole idea of research is very sterilizing and very antagonistic to life. I think the theater exists only in life, living people on stage, and, the records are something like freeze-dried coffee . . . The only thing that counts, whether it's the dance or the theater, is what goes on on the stage. And the rest, I think, is irrelevant.*[8]

Although he himself is a critic, Gottfried is really attacking widely all efforts to write on dance. One is free to reject arbitrarily the validity of all writing and research on dance as Gottfried has done. But such personal assertions, even if they were to be amassed in large numbers, do not override the convincing reasons already cited in support of dance writing and research. Gottfried fails to see that his position contradicts his own action of asserting a *theoretical* claim to the effect that art is "just pleasure, just joy."[9]

Even so able a writer as Marcia Siegel has expressed serious reservations about forms of writing about dance that are at all removed from direct involvement with the dance experience. Remarking on dance criticism, Siegel notes,

> *Dance is a physical art, and I think the over-intellectualized kind of writing where the writer detaches himself from all sensory*

Baryshnikov, American Ballet Theatre.
Photo by Martha Swope

ephemeral qualities and emotional connotations, is just about worthless. The one inescapable fact about dance criticism is that you have to be in contact with the real live thing as it is performed. Yet the path between evading the dance event through mental gymnastics and condemning it too superficially through journalism is far from clear, and it's found mostly by instinct at this point.[10]

Siegel's statement raises a different kind of issue. Siegel does not question the value of writing and research on dance, and I am sure that she deplores the low level of dance literacy that presently exists. But her statement in the quotation would limit the scope of relevant (what she would approve of) writing on dance to writing that is directly in touch with the sensory, ephemeral qualities of live performance. This proposed limit effectively invalidates all writing other than criticism! Theoretical discussions of dance necessarily go beyond the sensory-emotive experience of first hand contact with performance that is the life blood of the critic. I doubt very much, however, that Siegel really intends to limit even her own writing on dance to criticism. Her preference for the particular, sensuous-emotive qualities, as opposed to the more abstract, intellectual writing on dance reflects a particular brand of philosophical empiricism, wherein "the truth" about dance is thought to exist independently of abstract concepts and generalizations in the physical-emotive qualities of sensibility. Siegel's preference may be valid; but such innocent claims to truth do have a history, and they can be justified or refuted by application of philosophical analysis.

Here is a situation in which the philosophy of knowledge—epistemology, can help the dance writer, by providing the procedures for testing various claims to knowledge and by identifying the philosophical foundations that support these claims. Uncritical acceptance or rejection of the claims of sensibility over intelligence impedes unnecessarily the progress of the intellectual-scholarly life of dance.

Kirkland, American Ballet Theatre.
Photo by Martha Swope

A portion of writing that is to be done on dance of necessity will exhibit the abstract, intellectual tone that writers favoring sensibility downgrade.

Present ruts in thinking about dance impede the development of its intellectual side and, thereby, widen the separation of sensibility and intelligence, and plotting the dance writer's way out of these ruts should not be left to instinct. Concepts and models for developing the intellectual life of dance are implicit in the data of sensibility, and in the existing intellectually based formal structures and symbolic character of dance. General concepts of aesthetics—form, expression, symbolic significance—that are applicable to the other arts can be formulated suitably for the discussion of dance. Present efforts to develop the theoretical aspects of dance do not yet compare to the advancements in these other arts. The most pressing current needs, therefore, are to use existing conceptual models where these are appropriate for dance, and to create new ones for advancing dance research and scholarship.

Patricia Rowe, a speaker at the CORD conference on Research In Dance: Problems and Possibilities (1967), takes a more sympathetic approach to theoretical writing about dance than does either Gottfried or Siegel:

> *In a sense, the creators and performers need no theories. Their primary work consists in making and doing. But others who are also concerned with inquiry in the arts—aestheticians, critics, historians, educators—find that their work cannot proceed in the absence of theory.*[11]

Rowe's position shows a clearer understanding of the importance of aesthetics, philosophy, and theory than does either of the previous writers. But Rowe widens the rift between sensibility and intelligence and thus inadvertently supports the irrelevance of these intellectual disciplines when she reintroduces the notion that creators and performers need no theories to guide their work. All forms of human symbol making behavior, including dance, proceed under the dominance of implicit and explicit theoretical guidelines.

Parade, Leonide Massine, choreographer. Joffrey Ballet, City Center. Photo by Gary Chryst.

Choreographers and dancers who understand the theory that underlies their work are in a better position to direct their efforts to their desired artistic aims than are those who stumble along mindlessly, and in ignorance. It is not, however, the primary business of choreographers and dancers to verbalize their theories, and to do analytical or critical studies. Others who are trained as philosophers and theoreticians can use the data that choreographers and dancers provide to develop these studies.

IV.

Previous arguments in this paper show clearly the connection of sensibility to intelligence. Their relationship must now be articulated and explored further in the context of dance research and writing. A first step is to delineate the different levels of knowledge that pertain to dance, and to approach each one with the proper conceptual methods and skills. I will limit this discussion to criticism, aesthetics, philosophy and theory of dance. Criticism is included because it provides the essential facts of aesthetic experience that constitute the data for developing theory and philosophy of dance. The other three appear for the purpose of calling attention to their relative neglect.

In very brief form, here is how I propose to delineate the four areas:

Criticism: represents the first level of verbal literacy, a direct verbal response to dance performances consisting of observation, description, interpretation, and evaluation.

Dance aesthetics: provides the conceptual framework for experimental and philosophical inquiry into dance as a form of art, examines the relations of dance to other forms of art, analyzes appreciative and critical responses to dance. All of these are based on analysis and interpretation of criticism, experimental and historical data, and reflective thinking.

Philosophy of dance: includes dance aesthetics, linguistic and logical metatheory analysis of terms, concepts and forms of reasoning applied to dance at all levels; broadly based substantive discussions of dance in relation to such areas as language, science, and education; and examination of dance in relation to the wider questions of human values and culture.

Dance theory: develops formal and technical principles, rationale, and general conceptual framework for various approaches to dance.

Today's dance criticism, which is the most developed form of writing on dance, aims at explicitness through concrete images, and it frequently emphasizes sensibility for the purpose of bringing the performance to life for the reader. The prevailing critical method of describing movement has resulted in some valuable data showing what perceptive critics see in contemporary dance performances. But there is room for other approaches that develop the ideas that such dance exemplifies, together with the discussion of its sensibility. The most important considerations for the discussion here, however, are the relations of criticism to the areas of aesthetics, philosophy, and theory. Criticism, as I have indicated, provides essential data for these areas, because it is the closest source of facts concerning performances and the aesthetic responses to these performances.

However useful criticism is as a source of the facts for other levels of writing, the methodological approaches for the theoretical studies of dance will differ from the descriptive and evaluative approaches of criticism. These other forms of writing consist of abstract modes of thinking, by their very nature; they employ reflective thought and analysis more than the first hand perceptual impressions of criticism. Critics and others accustomed to their language of sensibility might object that theoretical concepts are too abstract for discussing dance. But this objection applies inappropriately the standards for evaluating criticism to theoretical writing. Instead of establishing criteria for good aesthetics, philosophy, and theory of dance, these writers cry, "abstract" and "removed" when they should be concerned with clarity of concepts, adequacy of explanatory hypotheses, appropriate principles of theory, the quality of reflective thinking, the rigor of reasoning, the adequacy of research, and the appropriateness of research methodologies to particular topics. Fundamental deficiencies in these areas will go unnoticed if the critical examination of concepts of theory remains at the lowest level of name calling. Dance writers and their readers should not confuse the necessity for remaining in direct contact with the facts of dance experience, which is incumbent upon every

writer, with how such facts are to be used to formulate the theoretical principles of dance. Dance writers should not think of abstractness and "removedness" as the marks of irrelevancy for discussing dance. On the level of theory, writers of necessity exchange sensuously attractive language for conceptual clarity and subtle tracks of reasoning, and their thoughts cannot always come packaged in the image-bearing language of criticism. The arguments offered here find the balance between sensibility and intelligence attainable through dance writing, only in a broad spectrum of approaches that includes the sensibility of criticism and also the sometimes arid, abstractness of philosophical writing. All points on this spectrum, including vivid descriptions of movement and the theoretical concepts that articulate underlying intellectual bases of dance are essential for defining the place of dance in human experience.

Dancers and choreographers have rightly urged that writers learn about dance from observing and participating in movement experience. *Quid pro quo* these same dancers and choreographers will surely agree to taking comparable time for learning about the methods and substance of dance aesthetics, philosophy, and theory. Their reward undoubtedly will be a fuller grasp of the sensible and intellectual parameters of dance as a form of art.

In conclusion, it is impossible to spell out a complete plan at this time for the development of each important area of writing about dance. But here are some immediate steps that will facilitate their development. First of all, establishing an attitude of mutual respect among critics and scholarly writers will be an effective counter force for the often paranoic suspicions that obtain among writers representing different aspects of dance writing. Second, the developing methodologies for aesthetics, philosophy, and theory of dance should explore the usefulness of multidisciplinary approaches with theater, music, anthropology, philosophy, and other disciplines. Multi-disciplinary programs provide a stop-gap remedy to present deficiencies in college and university dance faculties. But the long range goal should be to establish a body of qualified scholars who devote their full time to the study of the theoretical aspects of dance, because dance is not likely to receive the full attention of any discipline in multidisciplinary approaches. Dance scholarship consequently will remain on a superficial level. Third, a restructuring of college and university dance curricula to include high quality academic programs for students who wish to study and develop the intellectual aspects of dance through aesthetics, philosophy, and theory of dance is urgently needed. Presently there is not a single dance program in the country that has adequate faculty and research resources for doing this. Dance programs are able to prepare dance teachers for dance-physical education programs and occasionally for a professional dancing career, but no one is really doing for dance what a university is supposed to do best: to

conduct research, to contribute to scholarly knowledge about dance, and to train scholars in the field. Fourth, there is a need to create regional dance research centers across the country. At present, the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts and perhaps the Harvard Theater collection provide limited opportunities for research. There is need for a wider distribution of resources in regional centers. The University of Wisconsin, as the first University dance program in the country is a logical place for a Midwest research center for dance, as the University of California in Los Angeles is the place for a west-coast center, and we might add an additional center in Texas. The availability of resources would greatly increase the potential for research and scholarship in these geographically diverse areas of the country. Fifth, most of all there is need for a greater number of first rate minds to join the pioneers in the scholarly tasks that must be accomplished for dance. Progress along these lines will undoubtedly contribute toward bringing together sensibility and intelligence in the field of dance. □

Appalachian Spring, Martha Graham, choreographer. Dancer: David Walker. Courtesy: WNET, **Dance in America,** N.Y.

[1] Lucian, "The Dance," *Dance Index* I (1942): 104. Lucian himself however attempts to refute this skeptical view of dance.
[2] G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics* II, trans. Sir T. M. Knox (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), 628.
[3] Twyla Tharp, *People Weekly,* February 2, 1976, p. 22.
[4] John Martin, "Isadora Duncan and Basic Dance: Project for a Textbook," *Dance Index* I (1941): 7.
[5] Lucian, p. 105.
[6] Edwin Denby, *Looking at the Dance* (New York: Horizon Press, 1968).
[7] John Martin, "Toward a Dance Library," *Theatre Arts Monthly* XVIII (May 1934): 361.
[8] Martin Gottfried, "Journalistic Resources," *The Proceedings of the Second Conference on Research in Dance* (Warrenton, Va.: Committee on Research in Dance, 1969), pp. 81, 85.
[9] Gottfried, p. 83.
[10] Marcia Siegel, "Two Views of Dance," *Arts in Society* VIII (1971): 673.
[11] Patricia A. Rowe, "Research in Dance in Colleges and Universities in the U.S.: 1907-1967," *The Proceedings of the Preliminary Conference on Research in Dance* (Riverdale, New York: Committee on Research in Dance, 1967), p. 8.

by Selma Jeanne Cohen
Selma Jeanne Cohen is editor of Dance Perspectives *magazine.*

After all, it seems to be the most unlikely combination imaginable. Of all the arts, dance is the most physical, the one that least requires the exercise of intellect. George Balanchine tells his dancers of the New York City Ballet: "Don't ask why. Just do it. You don't need to know why." They don't need to think; they don't even need to read. Dancers can remember the steps of a ballet without a single written word or symbol to guide them. They call it "muscular memory." Nothing mental about it.

Yet a number of distinguished minds have applied themselves to dance. Both Plato and Aristotle thought it worth discussion, and in eighteenth-century France a number of aestheticians considered dance as one of the major art forms. Now, after a few setbacks, incited by Puritans on one continent and Victorians on another, writers are again dealing deftly and provocatively with the ideas of dance as well as with the events of its history.

Unfortunately, viable dance scholarship has been outweighed by quantities of fan publications. There is nothing essentially wrong with the latter (or would not be if only they were accurate, which most of them are not), as long as they are put in their proper place, which is not that of substituting for in-depth scholarship. There has been too little serious work to compensate for the frivolities, and the imbalance has led to the prevailing opinion that dance scholarship is non-existent. It has and does exist—albeit in small quantities.

Why has progress been so slow? In general, dancers and even choreographers have been wary of scholarship. Active rather than speculative by nature, they fail to see how the researcher can be of any use. Dancers do not need history or theory; they need bodies attuned to respond to directions, instantly and accurately, a condition that is only inhibited by reasoning. Consequently, academic subjects have formed a meagre part of the dancer's education, when they formed any part of it at all. Balanchine responded to Edwin Denby's sensitive analysis of his choreography: "Too fancy." Hardly encouraging, but typical.

To be sure, there were some mavericks. John Weaver staged some ballets and also wrote **An Essay Towards a History of Dancing** in 1712. Among later choreographers, Jean Georges Noverre and Michel Fokine declaimed against the abuses of their day in apologias for their

the state of sylphs in academe: dance scholarship in america

work, but most chose to let their dancers "just do it" and their audiences just watch it. Then, however, along came Isadora Duncan, who rebelled against the syndrome of the brainless ballerina and lobbied for a free mind in a free body. The choreographer as thinker became a feature—though sometimes a maligned one—of what was known as the American modern dance.

In 1926, Margaret H'Doubler started the first dance major program at the University of Wisconsin, and in time classes in modern dance spread to campuses throughout the country. And where was dance in the university? In the physical education department, of course, since it was the one that had all the necessary facilities—big spaces to move in (gyms), dressing rooms, showers. What else could dance need? A library? Desks? What for? The early curriculum focused on creativity and movement skills. At this point, the modern dance had no use for history, since it felt that dance had been on the wrong track for several centuries, and nobody knew what had happened before that.

What was probably the first dance history course in the United States was taught by John Martin at the Bennington College School of Dance in the summer of 1934. As dance critic of The New York Times, Martin took his job seriously. He found out what had happened before ballet went off on the wrong track, teaching his students to respect the sacred ritual of their forebears and to think—yes, think—about what they were dancing and why. They, in turn, went back to their own campuses to start their own courses in dance history.

The work developed slowly, for few of the college faculty could devote all their time to dance (someone had to teach archery). But some of them managed a once-a-week, one-semester survey that ranged from the caveman to Martha Graham (with a nod to the ballet in between). Sometimes there was also a course in "theory" or "philosophy and aesthetics" that culminated in a paper entitled "what Dance means to me."

Meanwhile, some of the classicists, feeling that they had not been on the wrong track at all, started to look into the glories of *their* past. Some of them had college degrees, but in subjects other than dance; some never got through college at all; not one of them ever took a course in dance history. Their work appeared in Lincoln Kirstein's erratic but erudite periodical **Dance Index,** which enjoyed a brief but brilliant life between 1942 and 1948. Trailblazing work was done for the little magazine by the late Lillian Moore, who

brought to light the long-forgotten careers of such important Americans as John Durang, Mary Ann Lee, and George Washington Smith. George Chaffee contributed some meticulous catalogues of the prints of the romantic ballet. Other distinguished authors included the German Artur Michel and the Russian Yuri Slonimsky.

Time has diminished the animosity between the ballet and the modern dance, and has seen the college dance departments leave their homes in physical education to settle into divisions of fine or performing arts and to add ballet technique to their curriculums. Courses in the intellectual disciplines of dance are sprouting in the most respected places. In 1974-75, Dartmouth, Harvard, Wesleyan, and Yale all offered dance history for the first time (Columbia students have been able to take it at Barnard for some years, though we haven't made it yet at Brown or Princeton).

A number of factors have accelerated the development of dance scholarship. Basic to the progress is the accessibility of source material, and the Dance Collection of The New York Public Library is now providing for this. While many libraries in the country, most notably the Harvard Theatre Collection, have considerable holdings in the field of dance, only this one has devoted itself exclusively to the one subject. Especially since the publication of its **Dictionary Catalogue** two years ago, the collection has provided the key to research materials for countless investigators. Most significant is the range of documents involved, for the written word tells only a part of the story of this ephemeral art. The archive includes visual materials (photographs, prints, original designs, motion pictures) as well as audio materials (records and tapes). Genevieve Oswald, curator of the collection, would like to see the inquirer read widely on his subject, but also examine relevant pictorial evidence, listen to a musical score, hear the voice of the choreographer, and see a movie as well. In short, he would have a complete media experience relating to his topic of research.

At the moment, our problems lie less with the accessibility of materials than with the know-how of using them. A number of young researchers have been dancers, or have at least studied dance, so they understand movement, but they have had no training in the methodologies of their craft and frequently come up with conclusions of the utmost naiveté—not knowing what questions to ask, not realizing that insufficient evidence has been accumulated. In this area, the dance ethnologists have fared better than the dance-art historians. The former have taken their cues from anthropology and ethnomusicology, applying them with considerable success. Only a handful of the latter have tapped theatre and art history, musicology, and philosophy for their potential aid, possibly because there has been some feeling that dance scholarship should develop its own, unique methodology. And so it should, for some of its resources are special, though this is not the same as saying that it shares nothing with any other established discipline. At times, the dance world's stepchild complex has led it to be overly defensive.

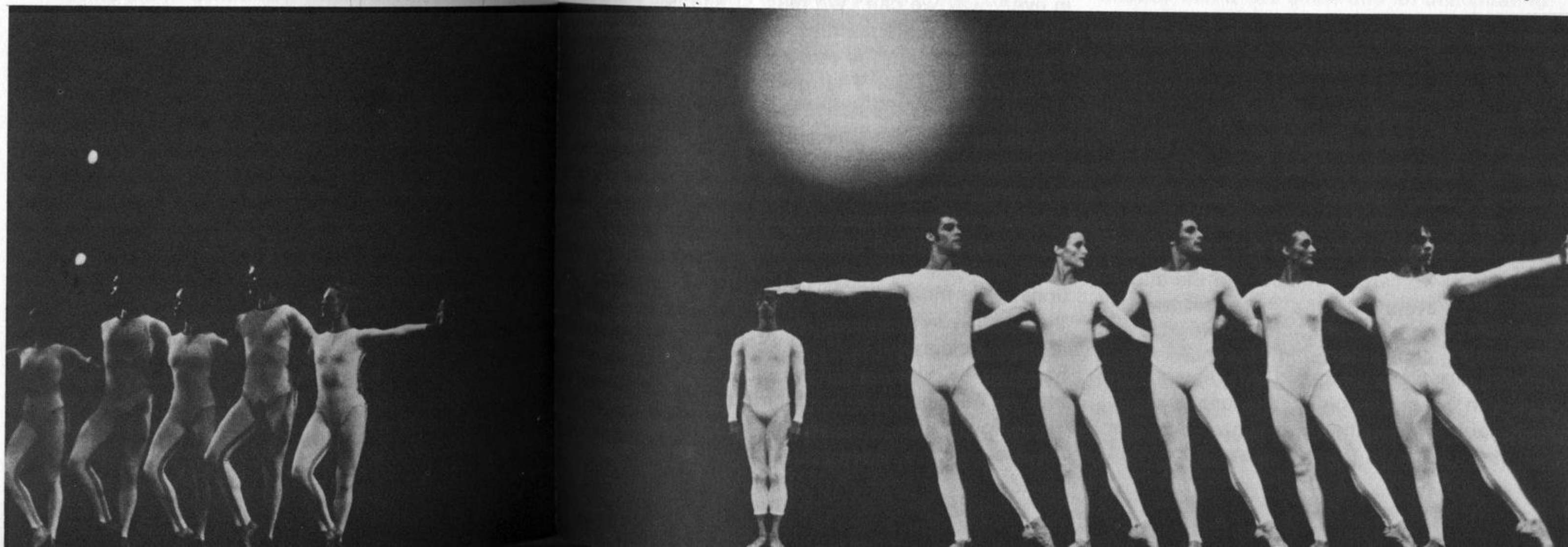
There is, indeed, though, reason to distrust complete reliance on other disciplines, for the academic researcher can be guilty of serious misinterpretations of technical matters unless he knows something of dance. Only in dance research is it proper for a library reader suddenly to jump to his feet, book in hand, and try out a step or two. It's not only proper, but necessary, for the test is physical, rather than intellectual. And the totally untrained body cannot be trusted when the instruction it is trying to realize were intended for a professional. The scholar need never have been a good dancer (hopefully, however, he is not a frustrated dancer, for this creates other problems). But he must be attuned to the experience of movement.

The techniques peculiar to dance research present fascinating problems, which we have only begun to recognize, much less solve. The use of films has become one of the most important. The values of motion pictures are tremendous, for they preserve that part of dance which has never before been capable of preservation—the performance itself. Yet its very capacities tempt the user to give it an authority it does not possess. On film, every contribution made by the performer—from the especially inspired dramatic gesture to the accidental miscalculation of a pirouette—is preserved for posterity. As a record of the dancers, as a document revealing contemporary or personal style, the film is invaluable. But as a faithful representation of the choreographer's intentions it should be used with caution.

As a record of choreographic intention, notation is, at least theoretically, more reliable. But even here discretion is necessary. Systems of notation vary greatly in their capacities to specify detail and, of course, notators vary in their abilities. Just to complicate matters, choreographers are notorious for changing their minds. The approved score for a Balanchine ballet of 1974 may be found quite erroneous when checked against the 1975 production of the same work. Why? Because a new ballerina has been cast in the lead, and Mr. B has decided that the choreography for last year's ballerina does not show this one to best advantage, so he has—quite simply—altered the part to suit her. It happens all the time. It's delightful for the ballerina—and a headache for the scholar. The Dance Notation Bureau tries valiantly to keep up.

Pre-film era dances present other problems. Their word notes and immature notation systems are difficult to use and often apparently inconclusive, since many details—of timing, of arm movements, for example—are simply assumed, because at the time everyone knew what to do about them. Nevertheless, some determined researchers—among them, Ingrid Brainard, Wendy Hilton, Julia Sutton, and Shirley Wynne—have reconstructed historical dances by drawing on every possible clue: technical manuals, notated scores, music and its contemporary practice, costume, and whatever they could discover about modes and manners that would affect the way people moved. Some of their work, in particular the dances of the Baroque period, has been realized with real taste and flair as well as authenticity. This has been one of our most exciting developments in applied research, based on methodologies devised specifically for dance.

Still, all our strategies need sharpening and some new ones will yet have to be discovered for the tasks that lie ahead. Unlike most of the established scholarly disciplines, nearly all of dance history and theory remain to be investigated. Many facets of the field that are absolutely basic to our understanding of the art have never been touched. For instance, we have no history of the development of ballet technique. If we knew how pirouettes were taught in the early nineteenth century,



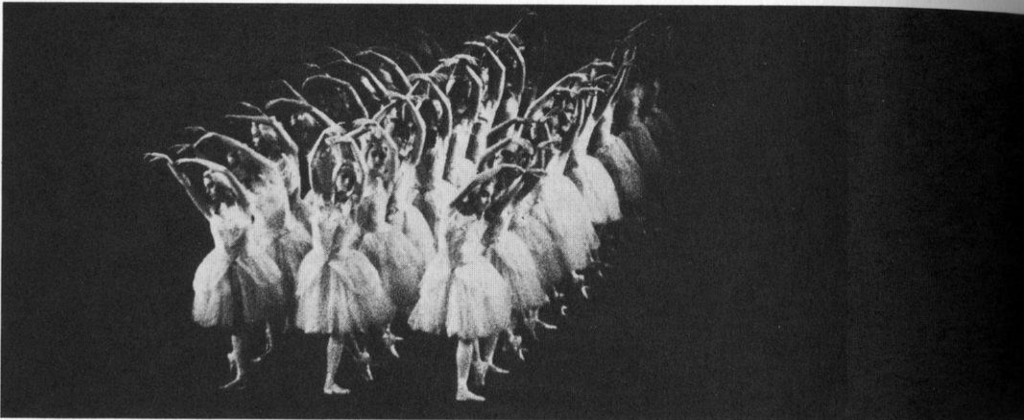
Opus Le Maitre, Van Manen, choreographer. Pennsylvania Ballet Company.

we would hold a key to the style of the period. When did lifts first come into the vocabulary? When did teachers first devise exercises for pointe work? We lack the answers to these most elementary questions. There are untouched historical periods, theoretical questions that have never been tackled, biographies of major figures to be written, chronologies to be traced, styles to be analyzed. You name it; we need to do it. But we must establish priorities.

Now priorities can be very personal matters, so I'm simply going to list the ones that seem most important to me. I am not listing them in order of importance, since they are interdependent and all should be worked on simultaneously and immediately—which is realistically impossible but nonetheless desirable.

Of course, we need to continue what has been started and move to consolidate our gains. Our archives must be maintained and expanded, for unless the records are made, the documents preserved, and the materials kept accessible, dance scholarship is mere fantasy. We must intensify our study of the documents and refine our systems of handling them, for without a mature and sophisticated methodology we cannot understand the subtle and complex evolutions of a great art form.

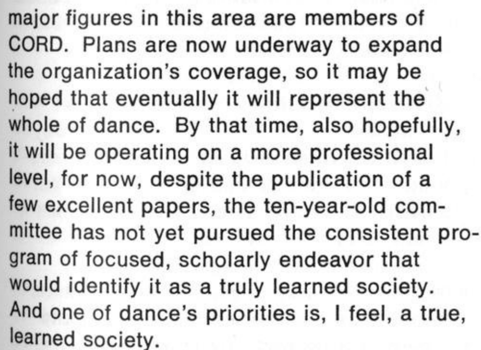
We must improve and expand the university curriculum in academic dance. Despite our recent gains, we still have no degree program in dance history and theory anywhere in this country. The graduate seminars that we have been holding at the University of Chicago are ending, for 1976 will mark the third and last of the summer series sponsored as a pilot project by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Demand for a permanent program is growing, but its establishment may have to wait on more favorable economic conditions. Meanwhile, a number of young people have been exposed to dance scholarship and, while none of them can continue with further advanced courses, some of them will build on that small foundation, making full-fledged scholars of themselves, since that is the only way—for the time being—to do it. Meanwhile, we must help them and their like in every way we can. We must strengthen our undergraduate courses, and we are doing so, especially with the provision of expanded material resources. The recent flow of paperback reprints of the dance classics, coming from Dance Horizons here and from Dance Books in London, is making possible a kind of classroom instruction that was impossible before. Not content with a good thing, though, I would register an added plea for scholarly editions of the classics as well as for translations. And there are invaluable manuscripts that await editing and publication. Now available to the survey course is an annotated set of slides—a service long available to art historians, but never before done for dance. This is only a start, for we need much more. Another priority that is about to materialize



Swan Lake, American Ballet Theatre. Photo by Kenn Duncan.

is a scholars' newsletter. We have needed this for a long time—a forum for the interchange of ideas, for a current bibliography, listings of work-in-progress, reports on new educational programs, requests for information, announcements of relevant meetings and conferences—any number of notices that could serve to enhance communication among scholars, both novice and professional.

CORD News, a publication of the Committee on Research in Dance, might have served this function, but has now become the **Dance Research Journal,** devoted to articles, chiefly in the area of dance ethnology. Although CORD members are said to represent ten countries and twenty-one disciplines, few of them are associated with the history or theory of western theatrical dance, and none of the



major figures in this area are members of CORD. Plans are now underway to expand the organization's coverage, so it may be hoped that eventually it will represent the whole of dance. By that time, also hopefully, it will be operating on a more professional level, for now, despite the publication of a few excellent papers, the ten-year-old committee has not yet pursued the consistent program of focused, scholarly endeavor that would identify it as a truly learned society. And one of dance's priorities is, I feel, a true, learned society.
As the editor of **Dance Perspectives,** the only journal to publish scholarly monographs on dance, I hesitate to comment on this aspect of our achievement, except that I would welcome more and better material. A little competition wouldn't hurt, either. Shorter pieces, and good ones, are now appearing in **Ballet Review** and **Dance Scope,** and some sneak into non-dance periodicals as well. Slowly, but consistently, the calibre is improving. But the lack of trained writers remains a problem.

While any other humanistic discipline can point to a major encyclopedia covering its field, dance can point to a single, one-volume compendium. While not a complete disgrace, it is nevertheless notable for its omission of a number of important artists and works, its plethora of factual errors, and its biases; e.g., "Balanchine is undoubtedly one of the most brilliant choreographers of our generation and the only one who has a genius for pure ballet"—this quoted from an unsigned article. The art deserves better than this. We should have a multi-volume encyclopedia, international in scope and staff, and planned to include regular supplements for up-dating. A long-term project, but one that must be undertaken soon.

So while our recent achievements have been considerable, there is still a long way to go. We must, above all, prepare the way for the young scholars. We need them. For the research that has to be done, for the books that have to be written, for the courses that have to be taught. Much potential talent has already been lost. Just a few weeks ago, I was talking with a distinguished microbiologist, who writes some dance reviews in his spare time, but had mentioned on several occasions that he really wanted to do a serious historical study—if only he had the time. I couldn't resist asking him: If the way had been open when he had the choice to make, would he have chosen dance instead? The answer was a sad smile and an unhesitating "yes." We can't afford to lose any more.

Interest is growing, and we must safeguard the future. Witness this letter from my friend Rose Anne Thom, who assigned a report on **Swan Lake** to two of her dance history students last summer: "The day before the assignment was due, one of the pair came to me in a state of frenzy. She didn't know how she was going to give her talk. I asked what the problem was. She explained that her book on **Swan Lake** said the prince was 18 years old and the other girl's book said the prince was 21! I thought it was a good sign that a nine-year-old had noticed the discrepancy between the texts. Hopeful?"

That it is. □

by Marcia B. Siegel
Dance critic for the Hudson Review *and the* Soho Weekly News.

Dancers are a people without a past. They have adopted neither the historical-aesthetic perspectives of American liberal education nor the pop culture's obsession with recording and describing itself. Despite its extremely high level of performance and production skill, dance is back in the Stone Age when it comes to developing the techniques and technologies by which other achievements of the human mind get fed into the ideological mainstream of civilization.

The reasons for this are deeper and older than we fully understand. I'm sure dancers suffer a heritage of conflict, between the primal, total expressiveness of which their art is capable and the puritanical attitudes that society has clamped on it for hundreds of years. Dancers are our scapegoats and shamans. They act out in public what we would most privately like to be, and we strike a certain bargain with them. We'll allow them to represent us on the dancing-grounds of confession and affirmation if we both agree that what has taken place between us must remain a unique, momentary, and unfathomable experience.

Actors, singers and musicians share this cathartic role in society with dancers, but the essence of what they do is much more easily captured, more readily repeated. Drama has language at its heart, and that is a very slowly changing resource to which the whole culture has access. Music has the tonal system of its particular epoch, for which harmonic structures and the instruments to produce them have evolved. By eliminating the almost infinite number of sonic possibilities and limiting itself to a certain sequence of sounds called a scale, Western music assured itself of a literature.

The only given in the history of dance is the anatomical structure of the human body. But each body has different proportions, distribution of weight, tensile development, perceptual acuity, stamina, and each body has a different head. The way dance looks is affected by all these things and by many others, and the way it *looks* is what matters. From the time the choreographer goes into the studio and asks his dancers to try something so he can see how it looks, till the time those dancers perform what has become a sequence of steps to a particular score and with prearranged costumes, lights and sets, a dance looks the way those dancers make it look, and no other way. Every time the dance is repeated after that, it will also look differ-

waiting for the past to begin

ent, sometimes in very small details, sometimes in very large ones.

Dancers learn visually. By imitation, they transfer the image they see into the muscles of their bodies; later, when they hear the music or the counts, they can reproduce the whole constellation of moves. There's very little that is spoken in a dance class or rehearsal; words don't convey what is wanted. Even steps with names, such as classical ballet steps, don't constitute a dance, because the audience sees the steps in their relation to the whole stage space—what direction the dancer faces, where and how far she travels—and in the context of the dancer's dynamics and phrasing and focus, the dancer's sense of *how* she comes to be doing what she's doing, and her inner feeling of what the movement is doing to her while she's doing it.

From the inherent nature of dance as a nonverbal, highly individual phenomenon flows a set of behavior patterns that we accept for the dancer and for no other artist. Dancers have an inbred sense of immunity from the judgments of society. They leave no evidence behind and are not expected to. For them and for us, the watching participants, the core of their art is at once too deep and too evanescent to recapture or explain. The choreographer enjoys the liberty, not easily granted to other artists, to change or permanently withdraw his work after it has been offered to the public. His mistakes don't have to stay out there to be held against his reputation. Similarly, the dancer's occasional bad performance can always be superseded in our memory by a good one.

Dancers think of themselves in the present. All of their physical and creative energy is directed to the work they have now in hand, and they are great conservers of energy. They would rather work on something new than spend their resources on retrieving the past. They fear and distrust fixed images. They believe that the next performance will be better, the next challenge more interesting.

These attitudes, by which dancers have kept their art vital and free of pedantry, also backfire on them every day. They have allowed themselves no real tradition except what they are overthrowing. They must constantly prove their own worth to society, because they haven't permitted society to develop a settled, sanctioned view of their profession. And in a hundred practical ways their work is more difficult, less productive and less financially rewarding than it might be.

The most important of the tools for preserving

dance—the one that has been widely condemned but quietly employed by most everyone in the field—is film. With stunning inconsistency, dancers have made us accept the inadequacy of film, while they filmed their own dances to help in maintaining their repertories. We are told that a film doesn't convey the choreography or the dancing, but films are withheld from scholars and students on the grounds that someone looking at a film might steal the choreography.

I call this the Massine syndrome. It's true that in the rough, competitive days of the 1940's, people did remount and rename each other's ballets. In fact, I've heard of provincial companies that are doing this today. Unscrupulous people are going to try this dodge as long as they can get away with it. But a wider knowledge of the dance repertory would make it much easier to spot these frauds, and even if the copyright laws don't adequately protect choreographers, informed critics and a knowledgeable audience are a better and quicker way to do it.

In writing a book about American choreography during the past couple of years, I've encountered the most extraordinary assortment of arguments justifying the unavailability of film as a research tool—from Massine himself refusing me access to all but two items (my choice, like a grab-bag) from the huge documentary collection of his and Fokine's ballets that are stored unseen at the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library, to the surrealistic rules in effect at the Dance Collection, where, once you have untangled the red tape and succeed in getting to see an occasional film, you are prevented from running the film back and forth so as to make detailed notes on it, because the film archive's major domo has promised not to let anyone steal choreography from films.

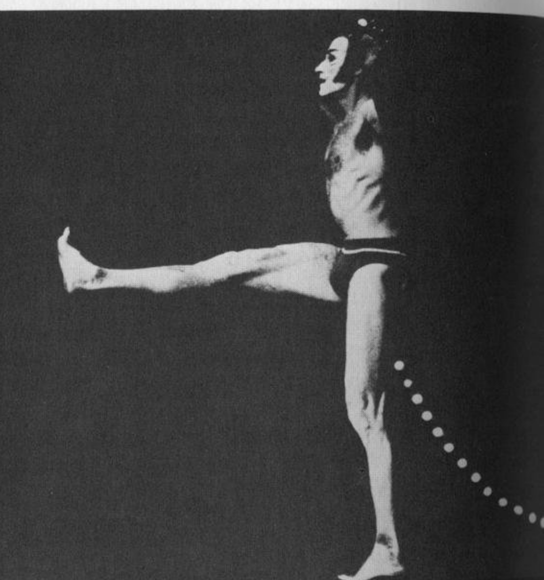
Backing up everyone else's reluctance to open up films to qualified persons for research or study is a clause in the AGMA contract when a dance company makes a film, providing that no one but the company and its employes can use it. This intervention of the dancers' union covers a vast quantity of existing film at the Dance Collection's archive and in the possession of individual companies, and film being made now by the Dance Collection under a continuing, publicly funded project.

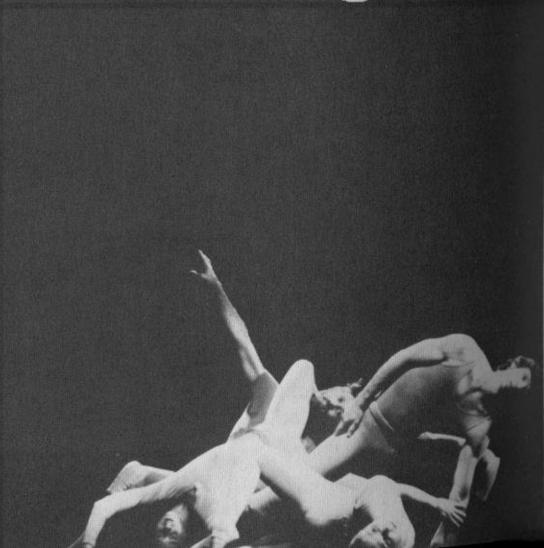
The clause is AGMA's way of handling a multitude of inequities in the way dance films are produced. Dancers are usually not paid adequately for making a film; often they are required to squeeze filming sessions into the middle of a performance season, and cannot dance their best for the camera; copyright and other restrictions make it advisable to film without sets and costumes; the high cost of stagehands, musicians and other unionized personnel puts a budgetary crunch on the preparations and presentations of the dancers. Instead of dealing with dance company managements to correct these conditions, AGMA simply throws a blackout on all films.

This is largely vanity on the part of the dancers, I think. They are afraid the camera will show them in some unflattering action or physical state. Once in a while they may appear on stage not at their best, but the moment isn't saved for posterity. Although my main interest in film is not in performances but in choreography, I do think dancers should be filmed to their advantage, not to their detriment. The fact is, much of the film that is closed to us today—the entire New York City Ballet repertory, for instance—is bound to be seen sometime in the future, if not by our generation. Whenever that happens, it will be in the companies' best interest to see that the films made now are decent.

Films are no substitute for live dance. Everybody subscribes to that thesis, and I certainly do. But film has been the unwanted guest of dance so long that hardly anyone has considered what it could do for dance if there were a lot of it around. The so-called work film—cheaply made, usually with one continuous camera in a bare stage and practice clothes—is the main vehicle by which dance companies presently document their repertories. Why shouldn't it also be used as a teaching device for critics, dance history students and anyone who cares about the interrelationship of the arts? If you are looking at choreography, there's no reason to expect a Hollywood production; in fact, a good work film is far superior for this purpose to the typical arty, multi-angled, heavily edited dance film that finds it way to the commercial public.

Greek Dreams, Erick Hawkins Dance Co. **Moments,** Murray Louis Dance Co. Photo by Kenn Duncan.





Videotape is an even less explored resource. Public agencies for some reason have been more willing to subsidize dance on TV than dance films, but so far—and this is written before the debut of the $1.5 million PBS "Dance in America" series—video dance consists mostly of adapting staged works to the small box. Video cassettes or video discs are just around the corner, but the dance industry still thinks of video mostly in terms of putting on dances. This most potent medium for educating an American public whose idea of dance still runs to **Don Quixote** and the **Nutcracker** has been untapped except to reinforce traditional images.

A few choreographers have made gestures in the direction of television, but with the exception of Twyla Tharp their efforts have so far been minimal. Tharp has been fascinated with experimental TV since early in her career, and has dreamed up some ingenious projects, one of which, an English-made pop-art version of **Eight Jelly Rolls,** is the best video dance I've ever seen. It has not yet been aired in the U.S.

One of the first questions asked by many newcomers to dance is "How do they write it down?" Some people even assume a natural connection between the act of choreographing and the act of recording. After all, conventional Western music is composed by writing it down. But if a composer worked the way a choreographer does, he would compose at rehearsal. Humming a melody, he would ask the violins to copy it, then he might put the other strings to work on a harmony, suggest ornaments to the winds, establish a rhythm and give it to the percussion, try the whole thing out, change it, try it again. Then he might have four bars. The rehearsal would be over and he would go away hoping the musicians would all remember what they'd done until tomorrow.

Dancers' process of co-creation with the choreographer isn't as laborious as it might seem because dancers are quick learners and excellent memorizers. The universal use of notation may have diminished these capacities in musicians. Their reliance on a printed score may also lessen their ability to hear themselves in relation to the ensemble, which is another well-developed skill for dancers. Even if dance notation were so widely known that it could be used the way music notation is, it probably wouldn't facilitate rehearsing. Dancers' eyes need to be on the other moving bodies in the studio, not on a score.

(top) Nikolais Dance Theatre
Murray Louis Dance Co.
(bottom) Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre
Dance for Camera, WGBH, Boston.

Notation is, however, the most complete and accurate way to preserve the structure of a dance. People have been trying to devise the perfect dance notation for at least 200 years, and by deciphering one of these many systems, dance historians can reconstruct really old Western theater dances. The ballet repertory as handed down in the accepted oral-visual tradition dates back only to **La Fille Mal Gardee** (1789), and even if we could be sure contemporary transcriptions of the oldest works are close approximations of the originals, it would be as if our music had started wtih Beethoven.

At present there are two main notation systems being used in this country. Benesh notation is quite efficient, and is most effective in recording classical ballets, where the steps are already codified. Labanotation is more detailed, and can analyze and document movement of any kind. Companies are increasingly having their works notated in spite of the cost of notators' salaries, and dancers interested in coaching have been learning to read scores so that they can direct revivals.

What neither notation system does, to my knowledge, is to tell us the style in which the dance is done. As long as we have the original casts before us, we can presumably see what that is—but this is the area that starts to slip first. Here a film can tell you much more than a written document, can show that breath of life in the dance that a mere recital of steps cannot do. Film can also often clarify whether a certain shift of weight, placement, phrasing, focus is particular to the dancer who's doing it or is an intentional part of the choreography.

But the definition of style, one of the most fascinating subjects in all of dance scholarship, is in its rudimentary stages too. Rudolf von Laban, the inventor of Labanotation, did outline a systematic way of looking at and talking about many of the elements that con-

tribute to "style"—the individual quality of any movement phenomenon, whether it's a person moving or a patterned movement sequence like a dance. This system, called Effort-Shape, has so far been used more widely as an observational tool in dance therapy and anthropology than as a supplement to notated dance scores.

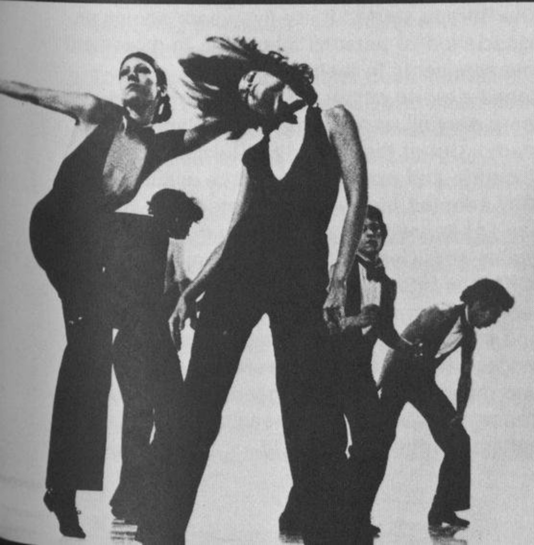
Once again I see the dance profession itself as giving the most resistance to this possible intellectual advance. Apart from its hereditary indifference to analysis and interpretation, dance in America during its coming of age, the period since World War II, acquired some additional hangups. The likely place for a dance literacy to develop would have been modern dance, with its rejection of the superficiality and academicism of classical ballet. And in fact, at the beginning, the modern dance stimulated a lot of provocative discussion, analysis and criticism. **New York Times** dance critic John Martin wrote several books about the meaning and modes of dance. Choreographer Doris Humphrey was always preoccupied with form and structure, and she gave us a fine book on choreography, **The Art of Making Dances,** before she died. Martha Graham, who said she was less interested in making dances than in dancing, was greatly influenced by Louis Horst's compositional ideas. The German modern dance, stemming from Laban via Mary Wigman and Hanya Holm, fit right in with this atmosphere of rational creativity.

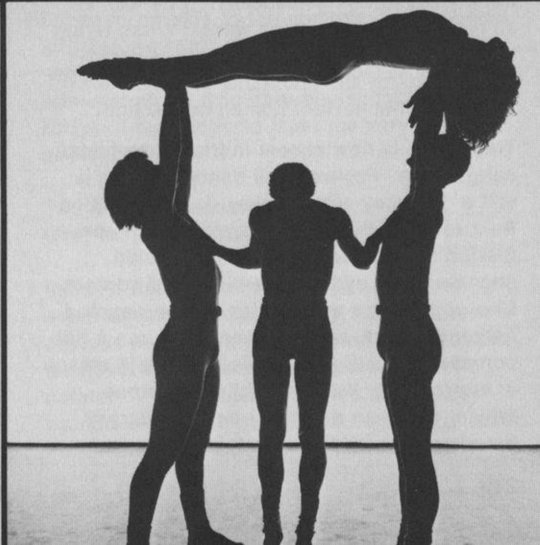
But anti-German feeling at the time of the war stalled off further developments in the Laban-Wigman line of thinking. Louis Horst, a musician, gave dance composition courses that soon became as academic and judgmental as Horst's proselytizing, professorial magazine, the **Dance Observer.** And an inevitable reaction against the highly individual aesthetics of the modern dance matriarchs set in as soon as their followers began to choreograph. The present generation of dancers seems to be primarily under the influence of three men, all of whom have deliberately turned away from the introspective, cerebral, moral concerns of the early moderns. Erick Hawkins emphasizes the sensual, Alwin Nikolais the pictorial and Merce Cunningham the kinetic possibilities of movement. All these aspects have opened up new areas for composition and performance, but at the same time they've brought back to the surface an anti-intellectualism that had been dormant for a while.

Cunningham has had an especially strong influence. Cunningham is one of our most gifted choreographers and dancers, but I think it's rather unfortunate that at the moment in American history when dance was finally about to receive the public support and admiration it deserved, Cunningham was denying his own past in modern dance and re-establishing an ongoing, egalitarian, egoless present. Cunningham disciples spread his gospel through the studios and dance departments: dance is what you want it to be, no one can interpret or structure another's dance for him, dance is of the moment and any form of analysis or reproduction destroys it. Today's young dancers seem to have a deeper conviction than ever before that a literate approach to dance is a bad approach.

Naturally, I deplore this attitude. I am a writer, and I have a lifetime invested in my craft, just as a dancer has in his. When I chose to write about dance, I felt I could make some kind of connection between the act of dancing and my act of response to it. Now I feel sure that words do not belie either one of those acts, but rather can lead me to understand both of them. And if I play my words right, they can lead other people to make discoveries of their own perceptions and responses. Reading how other people connect to dance enhances my enjoyment of it. I think we need more words about dance, not the self-serving, manipulative words of the mass media reviewers, but the considered description and analysis of people who are trained to see well, to think well and to write well. The dancing we saw last night is as remote as Pavlova or Louis XIV. But I don't see why we should have to babble about them as if they were all the same thing. I want to know what makes our dance different from theirs, why we have the dance we do, who our dancers are and why *they* are ours instead of dancers who move some other way entirely. And I don't see how we can know where we are if we don't know where we've been. □

(top): New York City Ballet.
Dance Theatre of Harlem.
(bottom): Twyla Tharp and Dancers.
Merce Cunningham Dance Co.





by Herbert Kummel
He is executive director of the Dance Notation Bureau.

Dance is the last great form of cultural expression to start the transition from an oral history to a literate documentation. It has not been an easy task. I can imagine the reaction of the old tribal story teller (seated in the entrance to his cave and instructing the young children in the history and glory of their past) who was first greeted with the news that a way had been invented to preserve all of the great stories *by chipping them into rocks!* I somehow doubt that he embraced the informant enthusiastically. If he was at all typical, his first words were, "What, trying to kill my job?" Followed by, "It will completely destroy the spontaneity that comes from the all-important human interaction!"

The Dance is now almost in that same historical position. Professional dance training is still a "monkey-see, monkey-do" proposition. As a result, the roots and history of the profession are limited to the minute period encompassed by living memory and contact. Choreographers who matter can be counted on your fingers, because each requires a full company of dancers in order to have a means of expression. If the weight of the stone carvings was an argument *against* literacy, the sheer expense of maintaining a company of seventy-five union dancers will eventually weight the scales *for* graphic notation.

The development of a language of movement has had a number of experimenters over the years. Many of their approaches were suited to the dances and styles of a given period, and tended to assume a knowledge of the particular dances, choreographers and social manners. Labanotation was really the first total language and has been called "The Mother Tongue of Dance." If the transition to literacy is now a measurable one, it can be attributed to and delineated by the growth and role of the Dance Notation Bureau.

The Bureau started thirty-five years ago as an association of persons interested in movement measurement. In their wisdom they established a world center for all notational systems, serving as an archive and place for study. Out of the belief that it was the most accurate and practical approach available, they adopted the system invented by Rudolph van Laban, called Labanotation in the United States and Kinetography Laban in Europe. ICKL, the International Conference of Kinetography Laban, meets bi-annually to monitor and standardize new developments and challenges. It insures the universality of language and measurement as the need for and use of dance notation grows increasingly within all spheres of the dance world.

toward a literacy of dance: have you read any good ballets lately?

Seven years ago—and appreciate the relative currency of the developments—the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment recognized the degree of acceptance of the Labanotation system (over ninety-six colleges and professional training schools include Labanotation as a professional requirement) and gave the Bureau funds to enlarge its role from that of a membership association to that of a major service organization. The key functions of the Bureau then became:

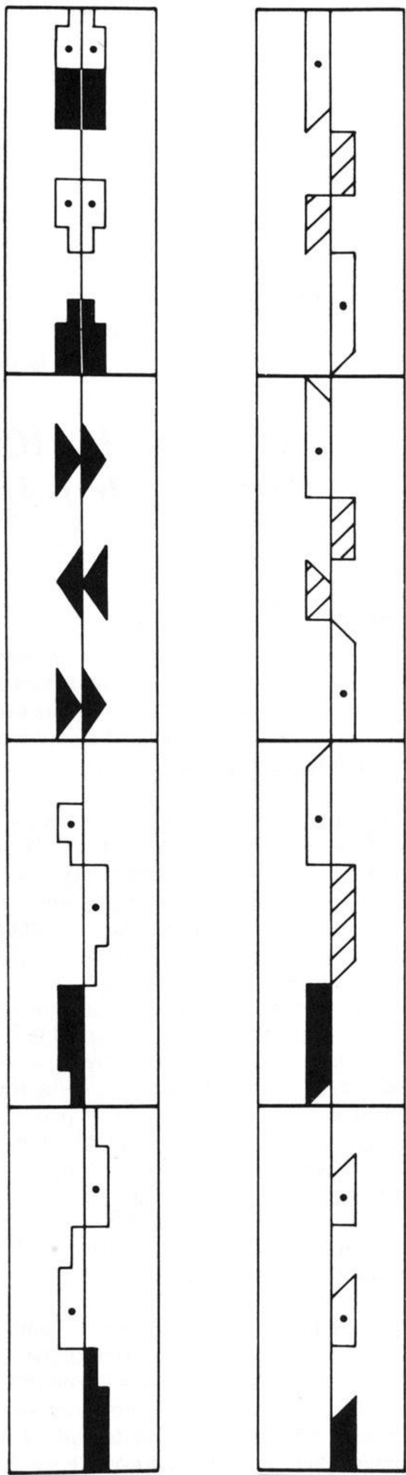
1. To develop a Library of Dance Scores with the best available methods of documentation, and the primary goal being that of achieving practicality for eventual reconstructions.
2. To develop all the tools of documentation, graphic, visual, mechanical, and those new techniques which remain unseen beyond the next corner; and to be a laboratory, library and practical workshop in assessing the merits of new ideas.
3. To provide the training programs necessary to produce the necessary staff and the teacher beyond the Bureau to link it to the professional educator, and to provide the teaching material for the development of the art.
4. To provide to choreographers a means of ensuring the durability of their artistic estate beyond their lifetimes for the benefit of their heirs and the general dance community; and to pioneer the development of the proper legal and administrative instruments in order to preserve and safeguard their artistic contributions.

From that point on the growth of dance literacy and the associated technology has been explosive. Part of the excitement has come from the fact that the developments were not the result of isolated scholarship, but rather were due to the pressure of a growing national interest in dance and the burgeoning of performing companies in many communities and states. Companies were being established to provide to the communities involved an instrument for dance expression, and they were headed by responsible boards and administrators, who naturally sought a full range of repertoire to meet the varying audiences.

The Accomplishment Over the Past Seven Years

Initially, the ability to produce a complete score developed most slowly, with all the obvious patience and deliberate speed of the medieval scribe and illuminator. As new notators were trained a degree of fluency was developed. A score that might have taken three years to produce was now drafted in

the short period of time it took the choreographer to teach the work to dancers who had not previously seen the work. The transition from draft to finished score took additional weeks, and the final orthography, the hand drawing of the symbols in ink, was another time-consuming process. Yet within four years, over 125 works were notated and added to the library collection.



The Bureau interested IBM in the problems of orthography, and two years ago, the Bureau and IBM jointly developed the Labanotation element for the IBM Selectric typewriter. The hand scribe has begun to give way to the printing press and twentieth century technology.

Five years ago, the Bureau undertook its first pilot project on the use of video for the documentation of dance. It approached visual recording with the same concern that characterized its use of graphics—specifically, how must we utilize the medium to enable the restaging of a work a hundred years from now, and not merely as an aide-memoire?

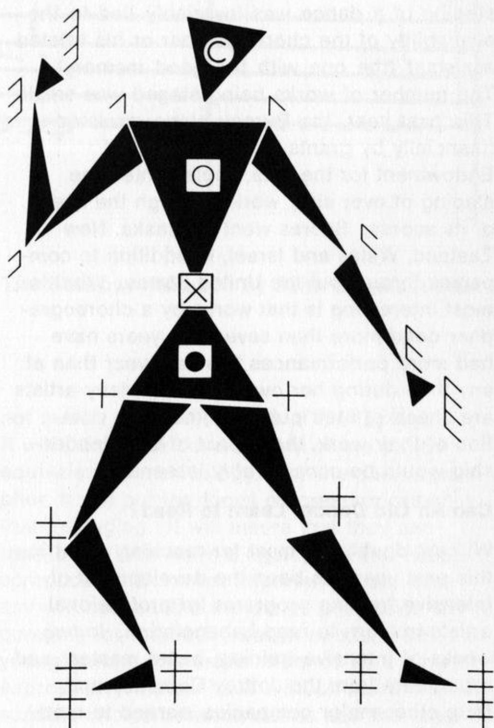
The obvious first step—for the Bureau (not for the untrained video fanatics)—was to use a trained observer, as a notator, to view the work during rehearsals and performance. That notator prepared a "blueprint" of the work, a shooting script, which indicated floor plans and delineated where each camera must be at which moment. Some material must be in slow motion, some in close-up, plus complete recordings from overhead and head-on, etc. With this detailed information, the equipment was hung, the stage marked off, and the dancers dressed in appropriate color. The actual taping was the smallest part. What is finally produced is a series of synchronized tapes, keyed to footnotes and a graphic score outline. The master tape (the Ballet Master's version) contains two views of the dance, plus three audio tracks containing the musical accompaniment, the lighting cues, and the choreographer's own comments. Other tapes are available for corps' parts or soloists' roles, This system of recording is useful for even the largest company of dancers, not merely for the small concert group.

Labanotation Kinetography.

Video has some very positive advantages. It is immediate, and you know what you have gotten at the moment of recording. The cost of the tapes is minor. It does have some major drawbacks. First, it is only the recording of a specific performance—with all the usual problems, compromises, etc., that are normal to any performance. Secondly, each dancer interprets the choreographer's intentions, rather than stating them. The later reconstructor may seek to revive the interpretation rather than the intention. Third, viewing the video tape or film is a cumbersome procedure requiring equipment, space, etc. It is not a score that can be carried and readily opened to a specific page. Video has serial access, not random access. Equipment is expensive, heavy, and requires much space, a stage, and staff.

Dancers have never been trained to learn a role from film or video. We know little about the visual learning process or why one dancer is a very slow learner while the second is able to memorize instantaneously. As a result, most professional companies that have used a film or tape hire someone to learn the work from the film, and then teach it "the old way" to the dancers. The Bureau has begun research into the process of observing and learning from visual aids.

Perhaps the most potentially useful tool for notation is the computer. The Bureau is currently involved in the use of computer-assisted notation. In the first option, the computer will retain the human eye and mind in the observation of the choreography, and will remove the slow tedious work of recording, transcribing, and editing that every score demands in abundance. It is estimated that from two-thirds to three-quarters of the time required to produce a finished score will be saved. In a second application, the computer will quickly produce a rough draft score from its own scanning of a video in-put. The notator will then take this draft into rehearsals with the choreographer and company to edit, refine and insure the exact delineation of the choreographer's intentions. The computer will then re-edit its own work and produce a final, finished graphic score in minutes. The potential of this tool is exciting.



Labanotation. Movements written with body signs.

Visual Versus Graphic Recording

The Bureau sees little need to weigh their relative merits, but most everyone else does. Since the Bureau is concerned with an ability to restage from documentation and not from memory, we use everything we can get our hands on. In fact, the term "complete score" refers not only to the choreographic score, but also to the annotated music score, the costume and scenic designs, swatches for costumes, lighting plot, and films or tapes of rehearsals and performances, when available. Even more useful are video tapes of the choreographer discussing the specific movements with the dancers. These are the primary sources for the ballet director.

Whatever machines or tools are employed for documenting the dance, the end product is the Masterwork Library of Scores, available in a format that allows for revival by performing companies.

The Present Status

Twenty years ago, even ten years ago, the staging of a dance was invariably tied to the availability of the choreographer or his trusted assistant (the one with the good memory). The number of works being staged was small. This past year, the Bureau alone, assisted financially by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, implemented the staging of over sixty works through the use of its scores. Scores went to Alaska, New Zealand, Wales and Israel, in addition to companies throughout the United States. What is most interesting is that works by a choreographer dead more than seventeen years have had more performances this past year than at any time during her own lifetime. Many artists are ahead of their public; without the notation of their work, the impact of their leadership would be *considerably* lessened.

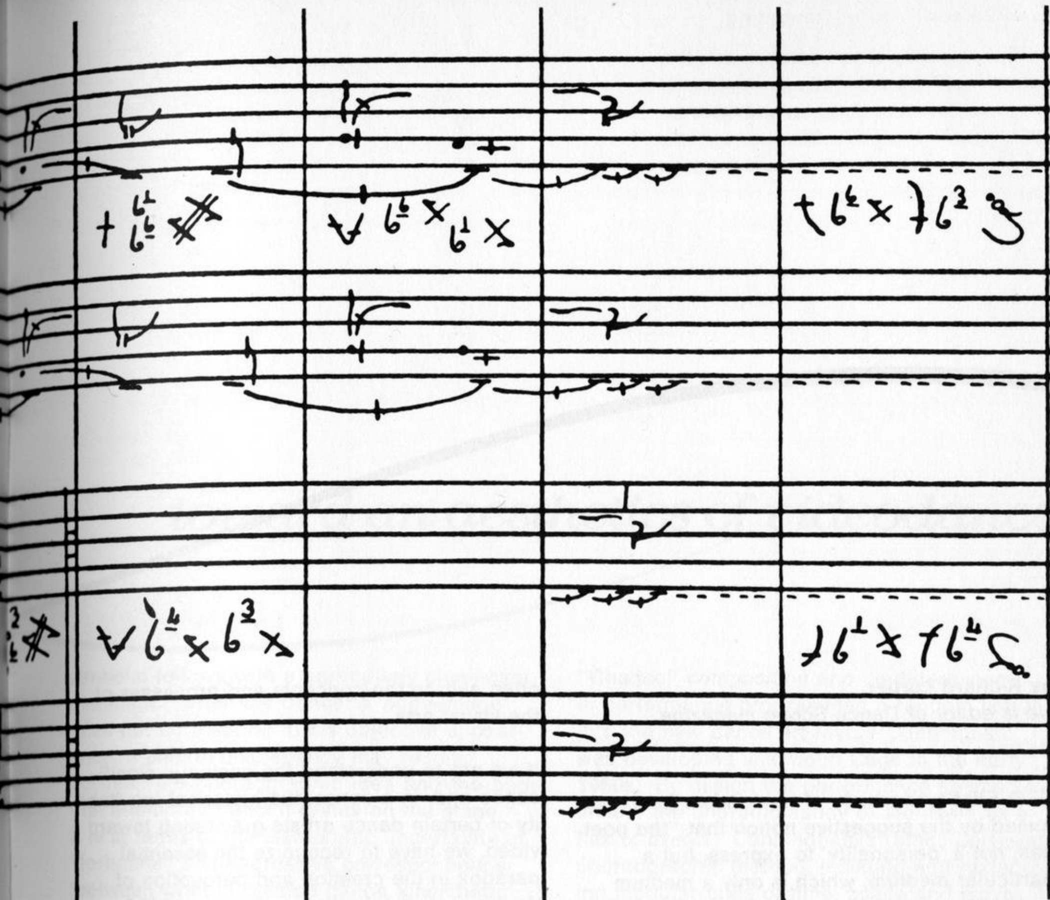
Can An Old Dancer Learn to Read?

Without doubt, the most far-reaching event in this past year has been the development of intensive training programs for professional artists to learn to read Labanotation. In two weeks of intensive training, ballet masters and repetiteurs from the Joffrey Company and from other major companies learned to read and understand the Labanotation. They now automatically use the Score to rehearse the company. It is no longer done from personal memory combined with the joint efforts of others.

The Syracuse Ballet, a small company of professional artists, took the ultimate step. The entire company was required to learn Labanotation. Again, in two weeks time, the company was taught—and they now read. Now there are major artistic and financial benefits flowing to the company.

First, dancers are given copies of the scores to learn their roles on their own time and at their own speed. The company is then brought together and paid for rehearsals and coaching. The choreographer is brought in only for the last week to polish and groom the work. The financial savings are impressive.

The new resource has the additional advantage of allowing dancers to learn their roles at their own pace. It will no longer be the speed with which a dancer learns a part which will determine opportunities—it will be the quality of the performance. We have now



considerably enhanced the performance opportunities of those potentially magnificent artists who did not happen to be quick studies.

For the future, there is nothing but gross, unbridled optimism. We shall reclaim a long heritage of ballet, modern dance and that singular American contribution, the dance of the Broadway musical theatre. Dancers will become literate! Even choreographers will utilize the language. The only ones who may suffer are those dance critics who do not choose to grow. And that, dear friends, is an excellent place to start to build a new level of dance achievement.

Giving dance its natural language and literate base insures its future and its potential. It will allow companies to grow in those instances where choreographers are absent. It will make possible a teaching that relates to the totality of the choreographer's demands, not merely to the memories of the faculty. It will permit the development of the dance equivalent of musicology. For the choreographer, it will put the focus on creation rather than restaging. It will insure that they can pass on to their heirs a legacy beyond faded scrapbooks. But most important of all, literacy will now enable the dance profession to compete for the best creative minds. The young person interested in dance as a form of expression will now have a much more reasonable choice between dance and the other professions. And when that happens, dance will play its proper role in our culture, and not merely as a pretty diversion, but as a real force in commenting on and celebrating the nature and facets of our being. □

The Shadow. Notation by John Cranko, detail.

by Richard Lorber
He is editor of Dance Scope *magazine.*

T. S. Eliot's advocacy of modernism in art was fueled by the suggestive notion that "the poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality. . . ."[1] I don't think Eliot would object if, for discursive purposes, we take "poet" generically to mean "The Artist" and "medium" as the class of all creative instrumentalities of the twentieth century. Eliot's idea has become the central insight of a whole universe of thought in which such oracular critics as Clement Greenberg and Marshall McLuhan found orbits, and in which newer media technologies found their artist-champions. One of these latter is television, which has recently become a most popular domain of the arts. With the advent in the early 1960s of portable, relatively inexpensive videotape recording and playback systems many artists of varied backgrounds began exploring its expressive properties. Not the fewest among these have been dance artists. This should not be surprising since in the modernist context[2] dance also has endeavored to express its medium, which is, as we shall discuss, a rather unique problem. We find the most advanced kinesthetic art increasingly concerned with its own visibility, and as such often akin to the concepts and processes of the visual arts.

If we are to understand the aesthetic significance and, in a sense, the historical inevitability of certain dance artists gravitating toward video, we have to recognize the essential paradox in the creation and perception of dance. In a brief article written in 1946,[3] Rudolf Arnheim observed that, unique among artists, "the dancer does not act upon the world, but behaves in it." He points out "one consequence of the peculiar fusion of subject and object is that essentially the dancer does not create in the same medium through which the audience receives his work." Arnheim's further remarks are unexpectedly revealing of some of the objectivizing motivations of modern dance:

> *The painter looks at his canvas, and so does the spectator. But you cannot see your own dance. The mirror is only a makeshift; in fact, no dancer deals essentially with his visible image . . . The fortunate correspondence between the dynamic patterns of what the dancer perceives through his kinesthetic nerves and what the spectator is told by his eyes is an example of isomorphism, as modern psychology calls it, that is, the structural similarity of correlated processes occurring in different media.*

toward an aesthetics of videodance

Arnheim follows with a particularly significant comment: "when the dancer's 'body-image' does not correspond to his objective appearance, a painful discrepancy may result between the choreographic idea and the body that attempts to give it reality on the stage." It is in terms of the isomorphic uncertainty of "fortunate" self-expressive correspondence (between what is created by the kinesthetic muscle sense and perceived by the visual sense) that we can trace the problem-solving approach of the dance avant-garde. A progressively objective visual and conceptual principle in their work prepared an aesthetic foundation for expressing the medium of dance through video.

In most purely visual, or shall we say optical terms, the dance spectacles of Alwin Nikolais have led the field. Appropriately he was also one of the first choreographers to submit his ideas and commit his dancers to filmic interpretation (**Totem**—made by Ed Emshwiller who now works in video with dancers) as well as to design original electronically envisioned dances for television (**Relay**, **Limbo**). But it has been the conceptual innovations in dance apart from Nikolais' "visual theater"[4] aesthetic which have dealt more deeply with the problem of isomorphism by systematically attempting either to negate any audience expectation of kinesthetic-visual correspondence or to unambiguously assure it.

"Chance" composition and "indeterminacy" in performance programmed a random factor into the new dance art Merce Cunningham was developing with John Cage in the early 1960s. By design the performance seemed to imitate the unpredictability of life itself, as a flux of events. Cunningham's rather Cartesian choreographic method, isolating and juxtaposing modular units of time, space and movement was as purely as possible a formal expression of only the medium (an "escape from personality" in T.S. Eliot's terms). What they saw forced audiences to abandon expectations of kinesthetic self-expression or choreographic meaning. Dance became *just* movement as for Cage music was *just* sound—a kind of aesthetic anarchism. Cunningham also showed interest in visual modalities. Collaborations with advanced artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Warhol, Frank Stella, Robert Morris—all of whose plastic concepts often paralleled his dance concerns—introduced simply other visually independent variables into a performance.

Along these lines Cunningham has recently acknowledged the aptness of his dance vision for television:

> *One of the special elements in my work has been the separateness of the dance and*

the music. Music can coexist with the dance rather than underlining or reinforcing the movement; they can be independent and interdependent at the same time. This is a commonplace on television, this possibility of several things going on at the same moment.[5]

Additionally it is the "ability of television equipment to zero in on any small movement or combination of movements and make them fill the screen."[6] Parts of bodies and fragments of movement can thus become new modular wholes and function as new independent variables in Cunningham's construction of dance. Through video such dance communicates its own structural concept in the most absolute visual terms. The "choreographic idea" corresponds exactly to what is seen.

A slightly later development, both derived and divergent from Cunningham's aesthetic, has been associated with "minimalist tendencies" in some sculpture and painting of the mid-1960s. This has relevance to the problems of isomorphic correspondence and to the purposefulness in that context of video. A chief innovator was Yvonne Rainer who had been a Cunningham student. Primarily concerned with the "look" of movement she has acknowledged two implicit assumptions in her work of this period:

1) A movement is a complete and self-contained event; elaboration in the sense of varying some aspect of it can only blur its distinctness; and 2) Dance is hard to see. It must either be made less fancy, or the fact of that intrinsic difficulty must be emphasized to the point that it becomes almost impossible to see.[7]

Many of the works of the Judson Dance Theater in New York, in which Rainer was a key figure, revolved around the performance of ordinary tasks and dealings with common objects, displaying a more matter-of-fact, concrete and banal quality in movement. Responding to the difficulty of *seeing* dance, she noted as well that

Repetition can serve to enforce the discreteness of a movement, objectify it, make it more objectlike . . . literally making the material easier to see.[8]

Just as Cunningham's "chance dance" objectified the choreographic concept Rainer's "task dance" objectified the appearance of movement.[9]

Both developments preconceive dance as more reflective of kinesthetic processes and experiences in real life. To the greatest extent such approaches concern themselves with perceptual problems rather than emotional expression. They assume an outer rather than inner view of the dance experience. This very directly anticipates the aesthetic options of videodance. For in new ways video allows dance to look at itself

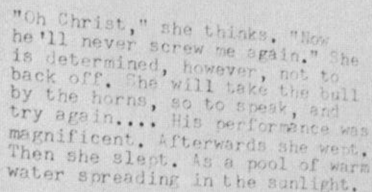
Rebus, Merce Cunningham and Dance Co. Photo by Jack Mitchell, detail.

This Is The Story Of A Woman Who . . . , Yvonne Rainer, choreographer. Photo by Babette Mangolte, 1973.

creating itself and thus becomes part of the concept of that creation.

Curiously enough, one of the main uses of video by dance artists has been both a major source of aesthetic dissatisfaction and a spur to the development of a unique videodance aesthetic. With the absence of any easily usable and comprehensive system of written movement notation, the half-inch black and white or color video system has become a convenient instrument for the inexpensive recording and preservation of dance. Most simply done this usually entails one stationary camera at a fixed distance from the performance space taking in impartially the entire scene. In a sense this is the lowest common denominator of vision, a seemingly neutral perspective which also tends to neutralize kinesthetic expressiveness. Certainly no human being looks at dance in such a static and impassive way. It's not surprising then that for theatrical or televised presentation of dance the straightforward documentation of a live performance has been roundly denounced by performers and choreographers. Compared to the crisply clear, larger-than-life image of similarly handled film documentation, video gives only a low resolution, unstable, miniaturized picture-like look at live dance through the wrong end of a dusty telescope.
It is true that the rapidly developing video technology promises—and has begun to deliver—wall-size viewing systems and better image quality, among other things. But cosmetic solutions to the problems of documentation merely forestall modal dissatisfactions which recur at each higher level of technological advance. While the neutral video documentation of dance has indisputable historical value, as an aesthetic experience it is a distorted shadow of a live performance—more disheartening and lifeless than a bad prose rendering of richly poetic verse. Furthermore, if dance is not to be doomed to failure in televised presentation (which could stimulate even greater popularity and prospects for this most rapidly growing art) kinesthetic creation requires nothing less than an aesthetic reconceptualization in terms of the expressive properties of the video medium.

Toward this end in the late 1960s some dance artists were invited into experimental collaborations with television stations (most often educational or publicly owned channels) to attempt to create state-of-the-art videodance. Rudy Perez's **District 1** and Gus Solomons' **City Motion Space Game** are paradigms of the genre. Both were made at WGBH in Boston, involving multi-camera set-ups with studio crews, indoor and outdoor locations and a battery of special video effects—split screen mix of shots, superimposition of simultaneous views, high contrast fusion of images ("keying"), etc.



This Is The Story Of A Woman Who . . . ,
Yvonne Rainer, choreographer. Photo by Babette Mangolte, 1973.

These exciting and expensive collaborations were, however, singular opportunities for each of the artists (both of whom, we might add, emerged from the Cunningham-Judson avant-garde). Their further explorations in video fell back on humbler facilities (most often "porta-paks" and primitive editing systems), still requiring extensive efforts of acquisition and production. Rudy Perez has done little with video since **District 1** (though he says he would welcome new opportunities) and Gus Solomons has only recently begun again to work in the medium, in collaboration with sculptor-video artist Doris Chase (more on her work later). His observations on dance and video are worth noting here. He outlines some essential limitations which have become for some other artists the contours of a new aesthetic dimension:

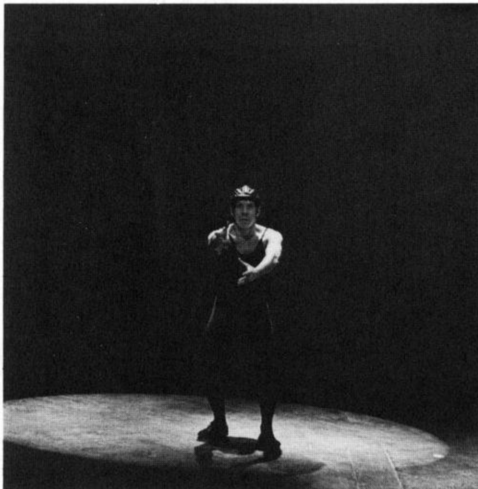
Dance is kinesthetic. Video is kinetic.
Dance is larger than life. Video images are small-size.
Dance is a reflection of personal expression. Video is intimate in its coverage.
Dance is dimensional in space. Video distorts dimension, exaggerates space.
Dance energy is sensed from close-up. Video can see clearest close-in.
Dance movement is defined by time and motion. Video is fast-paced; it holds one's interest in short phrases.
Dance is temporal. Video is immediate.
Dance and video are transitory.
VideoDance is not yet.[10]

One of the obvious assets of video for dance, which is also its unique electronic feature (most distinguishing it from film) is live feedback: the instantaneous monitor display and possibility of immediate playback of recorded images. Such traditional choreographers as Eliot Feld and others in ballet and modern dance have utilized this aspect for a kind of choreographic sketching—allowing them to study movement phrases over and over again in their creating process without exhausting their dancers. For dancers in rehearsal video can serve as an alternative or an adjunct to the mirror. These are of course process adaptations where video plays no role in the ultimate presentation of dance.

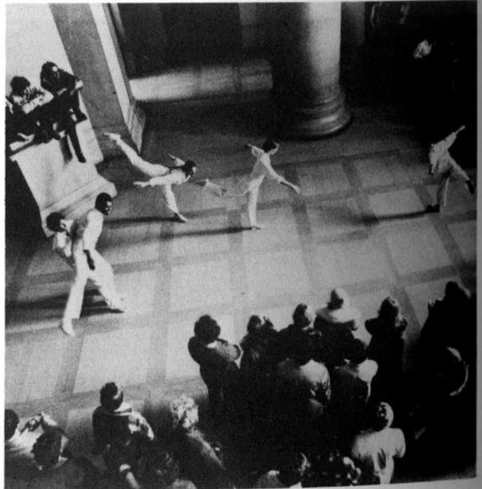
Nevertheless, it is this same "live" feature that has perhaps most intrigued some video-dance artists. A recent statement by June Marsh, member of an English group called VideoArt, working with dancers, emphasizes a collaborative attitude and fundamentally conceptual context:

Videodance is concerned with the paradox of process, performance and product. Video allows extension back into time to produce interaction with the present. The cameraperson sees the dancer, then the image of the dancer's reaction to that image. The process is dynamic and continuous, an open-ended situation where the technology and movement develop simul-

System, Rudy Perez, choreographer. Photo by Johan Elbers.



Lobby Event, #1, Gus Solomons, choreographer and company. Photo by Lois Greenfield.



taneously, where the dancer is the camera-person, is the technician, is the choreographer.[11]

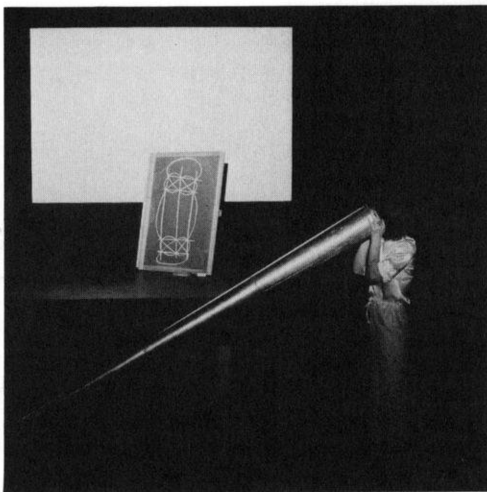
Many of the artists working in this mode have a more extensive background in the visual arts than dance. Often their interest in dance and performance art is an outcome of their involvement with figurative forms in video art. Dance comes to be understood in most open terms as "human movement potential" (to use Lulu Sweigard's phrase). In a sense, their kinesthetic awareness begins where "chance dance" and "task dance" leave off, further expanding the dialogue between art and everyday life. We might add that this has been a recurring modernist theme in the cultural evolution of the twentieth century, with examples too obvious and numerous to mention. Video is the most intimately life-like medium ever appropriated by the arts (photography is static and film non-live—we await the perfection of moving holograms). Natural presences come off better than arty performances. (We have only to consider the television success of informal talk shows, family situation comedies and homely soap operas.) So far the most successfully ambitious videodance has dealt with restructurings of audience perception and new concepts of aesthetic distance, not with personal urgencies of theatrical self-expression.

Joan Jonas' performance pieces have utilized live video systems to integrate the circuits, as it were, of movement and language, of physical events and symbolic meanings. She is one of the few inter-media artists (neither dancer nor video artist quite describe her—though she has been both) who recognizes the camera-monitor system as an environmental tool which can break down psychic and aesthetic distances between audience and performer. She writes:

> *In my performances video is a dislocating medium, transmitting signals to the audience. In* **Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy** *(1972) the images were details of the live performance. The monitor was an ongoing mirror for my activities. The simultaneous viewing of performance and video resulted in a continuous non-narrative fusion of imagery. A visual poem. Qualities peculiar to television were used such as the vertical roll, to structure and distort my movements. In* **Funnel** *(1974) and* **Twilight** *(1975) monitors enabled me to alter the audience's perception of space. They were boxes revealing hidden spaces and also sources of light.*[12]

A Jonas work such as **Twilight** is hermetically evocative. Movement themes suggestive of eidetic memories and archetypal meanings are made altogether more elusive by their evanescent recurrences on the glimmering monitor screens. The very title of the piece suggests the quality of video light as a kind

Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy, Joan Jonas, choreographer.



Mirage, Joan Jonas, choreographer.

of perceptual limbo, drawing the viewer into an ambiguous realm somewhere between what is seen and what is known. Her use of video induces an intimately personal viewer experience within a mysteriously formal situation.

The live video performances of Amy Greenfield are also environmentally conceived but her concerns are more objectively "dancerly." **Fragments: Mysterious Beginnings** was reminiscent of early cubist methodology. In a modest gallery space two camerapersons shot the lithe improvisations of a single dancer from a variety of angles and distances. With zooms to isolate detail and vigorous camera manipulations, the numerous live monitors surrounding the performance area registered extreme close-ups, pull-backs, image inversions, unexpected and often vertiginous perspectives—all points of view impossible from the spectator's station. The process of the piece played off the audience's perception of fluidly continuous dance movements in tactiley real space against the discontinuous, fragmentary camera perspectives only visible on the monitors. The audience could see both the dancer and other "seeings" of the dancer, for unpredictable durations. This tended to relativize one's subjective perception and dissociate the sense of performance time. It became the viewer's option to synthesize a satisfying experience of the dance from a simultaneity of multiple, all-over views. This selective optical involvement visually objectified the dance experience. The physicality of the video operations displaced one's sense of the physicality of the dancer, whose movements seemed ever more a transmission of pure energy.

Greenfield, who is herself a dancer, describes her video work as a kind of dematerializing of dance:

> *For me, dance, choreography and video are one thing—they all proceed from the dance of electrons. My energy as a video dancer comes from finding the rhythm of electrons within myself. It's a direct sensation of travelling, charged particles which generate heat . . . even when I'm not moving. Video dance is what's underneath, what can't be seen . . . transmission, not projection . . . To be as natural and transparent as in one's most private moments for the camera . . . the energy can be transmitted through the monitor into another person's insides . . . Caring for my video equipment, I learned to care for my own body.*[13]

Even in the closed system of her videotape **Dervish** the dancer's kinesthetic behavior in space becomes etherealized on the video screen. For twenty minutes we watch Greenfield, wrapped in a white sheet, simply spin.

Fragments: Mysterious Beginnings, Amy Greenfield, choreographer. Dancer: Ben Dolphin. Camera: Richard Leacock. Photo by John Budde.

Dialogue for Cameraman & Dancer, Amy Greenfield, choreographer and dancer. Camera: Willson Barber. Photo by John Budde.

The ceaseless repetition makes us lose our sense of time and gives the dynamic movement an object-like permanence. And yet, the actual physicality of her body also seems to dissolve. Subtle superimpositions of alternate camera views create delicate image transparencies while the whippings of the sheet across the monitor screen emit luminous stroboscopic flickerings. Rhythmic ambient sounds of shuffling and breathing reinforce the hypnotic effects of optical repetition—lulling open the viewer's mind, inducing an almost trance-like state of unfocused vision. Within a minimalist aesthetic context Greenfield's videodance tape transmits kinesthetic activity as pulses of pure energy acting immediately on our nerves, expanding our awareness.

We must realize that the making of a videodance tape raises very different aesthetic questions than using video systems in the process of live performance. Live image feedback is certainly the most unique expressive feature of the medium, but is it the most expressive? In their exemplary work, Joan Jonas and Amy Greenfield use video systems to integrate the process of image creation and performance. With aesthetic strategies of spatial-temporal dislocation they explore and exacerbate ambiguities of perception and probe new dimensions of expression. A videodance tape, however, is a finished aesthetic product which is to be viewed by itself. It alone cannot engage the audience in environmental modalities of comparative perception. What then are the expressive possibilities of the video medium that can distinguish a dance tape from a film of the dance?

In a synoptic article Jeffrey Bush and Peter Z. Grossman (members of ARC—Arts Resources in Collaboration—a New York studio producing videodance tapes) describe some distinctive electronic features as they can be used in creating videodance:

> *Unlike live performance, video space and forms are infinitely malleable. Depth, height and width can be created and obliterated arbitrarily. A video scene can suddenly be stretched and distorted like a funhouse mirror or exploded out into the expanses of the galaxy only to be brought down to the microscopic a moment later. People's bodies can be scrambled until they have no relationship whatever to human form. In no other medium is there such a natural transition from real to abstract and television is also the only place where the transition can go on* continuously.[14]

Though Bush and Grossman obviously appreciate the aesthetic excitement of these techniques they also share the wariness of many dance artists who have seen their ideas and bodies become no more than the raw pig-

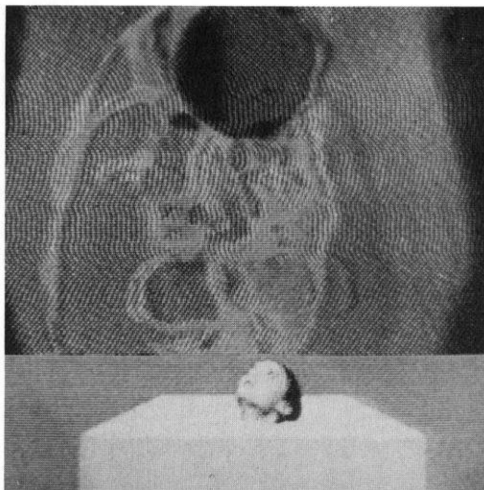
Dervish, Amy Greenfield, choreographer and dancer. Camera: Willson Barber. Photo by John Budde.

Arts Resources in Collaboration. Dance: Marjorie Gamso. Video: Jeff Bush. Photo by Tom Brazil.

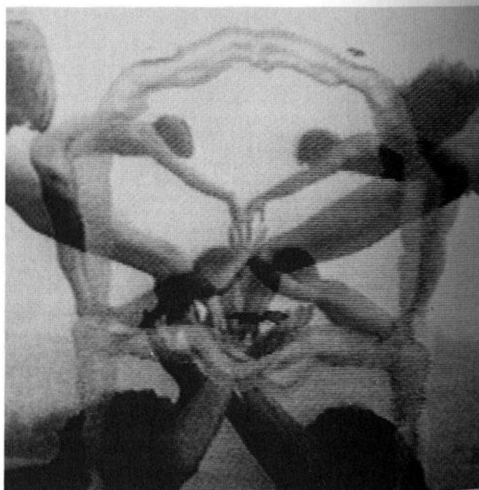
ments of a kind of decoratively shallow video painting. Non-narrative videodance often falls into such easy expressionistic indulgences. The technologically sophisticated videodance tapes of Ed Emshwiller (notably **Scapemates** and **Thermogenesis**) have been badly marred as works of art for calling so much attention to a rhetoric of electronic tricks. His more recent tape with dancers, **Pilobolus and Joan**, was more successful, but it was not videodance. The dancing was incidental to a storyline (derived from Kafka's **Metamorphosis**), basically a character's role—as is the dancing in a Fred Astaire film. Special effects in the movement segments had symbolical connotations, projecting states of mind in the characters and transformations of their own perceptions.

Pilobolus and Joan could not have been made equivalently as a film, but the use of cuts and fades and other editing techniques are familiar terms in the filmic vocabulary. In more dancerly videodance this film-style editing has often had a disastrous, spatially-disorienting effect (when perceptual dislocation was *not* the intent). Bush and Grossman feel that "dance time," which "depends on continuity of movement" should not be turned into "cinema time" which derives from a "progression of images." They hold that maintaining "the visual flow" is essential since dance movement cannot really be followed across a cut. If the dance is not to be "reduced to a two dimensional display of images . . . the sacrosanct technique of cutting has to be cut itself." Furthermore, they believe that "cutting will not be necessary if the work of the camera artist is made an integral part of the choreography . . . scored together."[15] Their approach has obvious validity in terms of more sensitive dance documentation and a more convincing evocation of "kinespheric" space. This attitude echoes wide approval in the general dance community. But to relate it to Emshwiller's intentions or avant-garde explorations in perception is like comparing apples and zebras. Our point is that as the varieties of videodance sort themselves out, yielding very different aesthetic products, dance artists will have some idea of what to expect from the medium. They will know with whom and toward what end they might like to collaborate.

A videodance artist with perhaps the most ecumenical aesthetic—neither conservatively "kinespheric" nor reductively optical-conceptual—is Doris Chase. She has managed in her tapes an optimal blend of electronic expressionism (video effects) and kinesthetic coherence. Not a dancer herself, but originally a sculptor, her elemental, movable sculptures appealed to the sensibilities of a number of choreographers. This prompt-



Scape-Mates, Ed Emshwiller, 1972.
Electronic Arts Intermix.



Pilobolus and Joan, Ed Emshwiller, 1974.
Electronic Arts Intermix.

ed Chase to make films of the dance involving her pieces and eventually her kinetic interests led to the more plastic possibilities of videodance. Through the discipline of designing physical forms she has developed a certain sensual logic in her *deforming* use of special video effects. Rarely effacing the look of the dance, they do rather masterfully enrich patterns of movement, creating new continuities among mobile points of view.

In one unabashedly beautiful color tape, working with the dancer Jackie Lee Smith, Chase used multi-camera superimpositions to interlay veil-like views in a tapestry of space. Trans-shifting transparencies of close-up and long views were controlled to maintain an approximate congruence of bodily contour and paths of movement, fusing image and flow. The experience of watching the tape seemed more private and personal than seeing such a dance live (perhaps this can be attributed to the voyeuristic intimacy of seeing usually unseen facial expressions and the detailed dance of the body's muscles). Fluid interweavings of form and subtle transformations of color, perspective, partial and whole views symbolically evoke the very spirit of the dance—a birth of life from the womb of space; a body decoding the flow of time.

Chase has also worked with modern choreographers Gus Solomons and Kei Takei, as well as Marnee Morris of the New York City Ballet.

She has utilized computer generated images in her tapes, transferred from film to video, and many of the capacities of experimental video synthesizers. Although the essential aesthetic impact of her work could conceivably be achieved through film (not as readily) her tapes do serve as a guide and inspiration for the discreet fusion of visual and kinesthetic expressive modes. "I'm a teacher at heart" she says. "Through film or tape or both" she hopes to help people understand "how they move or could move—body awareness, body image."[16] She expects her next step will be toward live performances with film, video and dancers.

While Doris Chase's work is aesthetically remote from avant-garde excursions into the phenomenology of perception, the attractiveness of her work may intrigue more dance artists into greater tolerance of their own disappointments with video and open them to other more experimental adventures. Whatever new turns a videodance aesthetic will take, the viability of the electronic medium will not be realized without a suspension of the aesthetic expectations of a live dance performance. Discomforts with the video medium as compared to live dance do in fact help define its unique expressive potential. Performance artist Carolee Schneemann, discussing her own work seen on video, isolates a crucial issue:

Dance Seren, Doris Chase. Dancer: Marnee Morris, New York City Ballet.

Full Circle, Doris Chase.

Video strangely disconnects my perceptions of a moving body-image from my own musculature: I do not feel what I see—(as I may with film). Nor does it convey weight and propulsion from eye into body . . .[17]

A choreographer who is now working in video, Marjorie Gamso, amplifies some of these concerns in describing her feelings:

Distances, spatial gaps between dancers entrance me at live performances, whereas I want bodies to fill the space entirely in video pieces. Bodies in videospace lack weight/substance, so it takes drastic close-ups to draw my attention beyond the surface . . .[18]

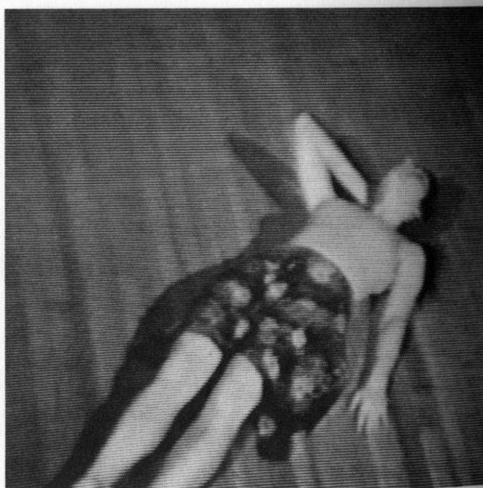
The crucial aesthetic issue for both live dance and videodance is the artist's and audience's perception of gravity.

Whether in ballet, where the body is in conflict with gravity, acrobatically aspiring to flight, or in modern forms where the forces and subtleties of gravity are more empathetically revealed, in live dance gravity is the kinesthetic constant. But with dance seen on television, in its glowing flatness and lesser-than-life scale, the relationship of normal gravity to the human body becomes an almost trivial awareness. On the TV screen dancers often seem to move as though under water. This tends to make viewers forlorn of live dance.

In my considerations of video space for dance the force of gravity need not be lost. It's quite there. Only the gravitational plane has been tilted up ninety degrees from what is in live space the floor. The plane of true pull in video is the plane of the TV screen. All gravitational tug in video is with the close-up, the shot close-in. It's the most tactiley effective and kinesthetically weighty view. But the visual magnetism of the video close-up does not hold movement well. As dance comes closer to the video screen it may have to move slower; or sublimate movement, as presence and stillness in space. While the force of gravity is the source of drama and aesthetic pleasure in live dance, in videodance which is just beginning to express its medium, gravity increases as forms close in on the viewer, becoming more detailed, intimate and penetrating. In videodance gravity creates more personal viewer involvement.

In many ways unlike kinesthetic experience, videodance provokes a psychological response. This certainly suggests new conceptual possibilities. Videodance, as a very new medium, can be greater, in some ways less, but always different than the sum of its parts. As more paradigmatic works such as

Marjorie Gamso, dancer. Video: Jeff Bush. Photo by Tom Brazil. Arts Resources in Collaboration.



Marjorie Gamso, dancer. Video: Jeff Bush. Photo by Tom Brazil. Arts Resources in Collaboration.

those we have surveyed are produced the very term "videodance" may have to be scrapped. Indeed, the word "dance" itself hardly seems adequate to new movement concepts in contemporary performance art. □

[1] T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and Individual Talent" in *The Sacred Wood* (London, 1966), p. 56.

[2] The term "modernism" or "modernist" is used throughout this article in the general sense of twentieth-century *newness* in the arts and in the more specific context which the art critic Clement Greenberg has described. He identifies modernism as art "in search of the absolute" through a "process of self-purification of forms." In the essay "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" (1939) he comments on this process: "Content is to be dissolved so completely into form that the work of art or literature cannot be reduced in whole or in part to anything not itself." In a later essay " 'American-Type' Painting" (1955) he isolates what seems to him a "law of modernism." It "applies to almost all art that remains truly alive in our time—that the conventions not essential to the viability of a medium be discarded as soon as they are recognized." (Both essays appear in *Art and Culture,* Boston, 1965.) While dance has been and remains an interdisciplinary theater form, it certainly has discarded many of its conventions in the twentieth century. What has been preserved and even heightened is the *visibility* of dance, so much is it "essential to the viability of the medium."

[3] Rudolph Arnheim, "Concerning the Dance" in his collected essays *Toward a Psychology of Art* (Berkeley, 1966), pp. 261f.

[4] In the Introduction to the "Visual Theatre Issue" of *The Drama Review,* XVII (T-58 June 1973) Michael Kirby asks "Where, therefore, does the visual stop and the spatial begin?" Though he states that the articles in the issue have not been limited to answering this in "any rigorous way," the included article "Alwin Nikolais' Uses of Light" (p. 80), by Barbara E. Nickolich, suggests in Kirby's terms that this kind of dance "spectacle" is a "prototype of visual theatre."

[5] Merce Cunningham quoted in *CBS Memorandum* from John Musilli (New York, June 18, 1975), "Re: 'A Video Event with Merce Cunningham and Dance Company' Parts I & II," p. 1.

[6] Musilli, *CBS Memorandum,* p. 2.

[7] Yvonne Rainer, "A Quasi Survey of Some 'Minimalist' Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of Trio A" in Gregory Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (New York, 1968), p. 281.

[8] Ibid., p. 271f.

[9] Rainer herself has since moved away from the minimalist position and has disavowed any interest in video ("that little black box has no appeal for me"—in conversation). She is, in fact, making films now, with highly personal expressive content—using movement in literary ways as emblems of consciousness and emotional ornaments. Other artists associated with her in the Cunningham-Judson avant-garde have, however, recognized video as a means of furthering their aesthetic aims.

[10] Gus Solomons, Jr. in Richard Lorber, ed., "Thirteen Replies For A Video Editorial," *Dance Scope* IX, No. 2 (Spring/Summer 1975), p. 8.

[11] June Marsh quoted in David Hall, "The Video Show," *Art & Artists* (May 1975), p. 24.

[12] Joan Jonas in Richard Lorber, ed., "Thirteen Replies," *Dance Scope,* p. 8.

[13] Amy Greenfield in Richard Lorber, ed., "Thirteen Replies," *Dance Scope,* p. 9.

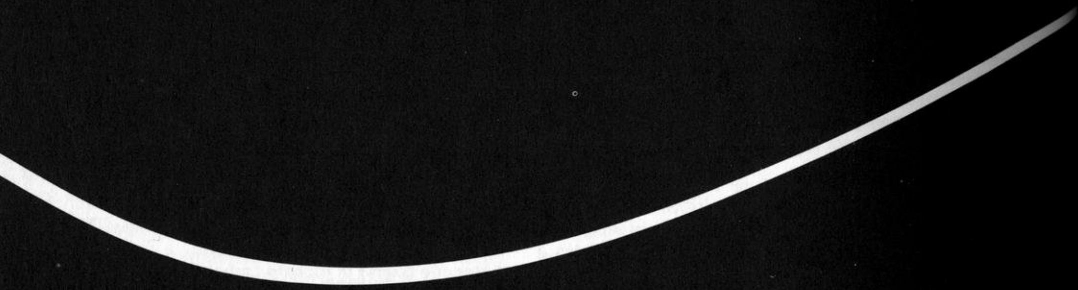
[14] Jeffrey Bush and Peter Z. Grossman, "Videodance," *Dance Scope* IX, No. 2 (Spring/Summer 1975), p. 13.

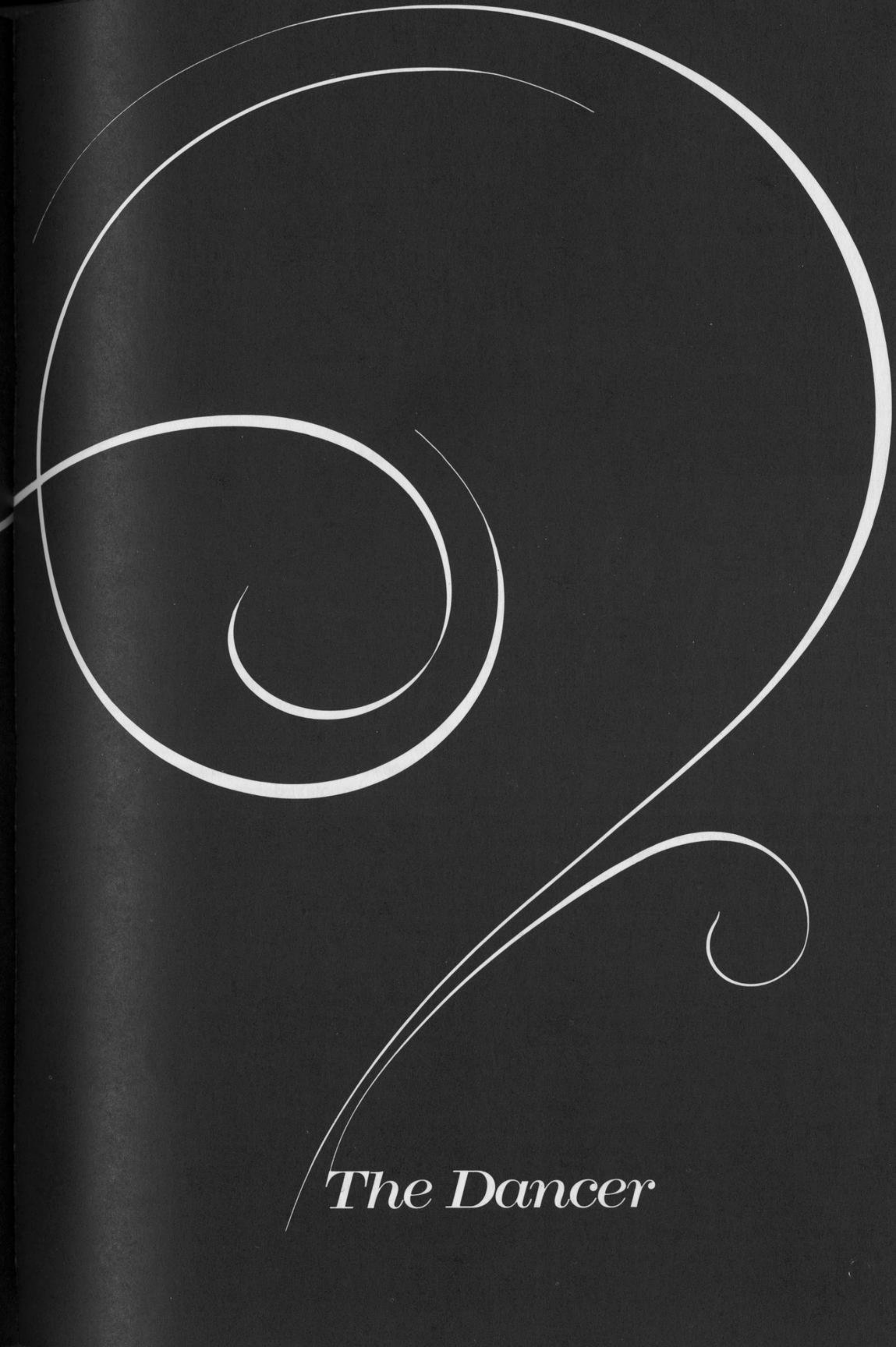
[15] Bush, *Dance Scope,* p. 15f.

[16] In conversation.

[17] Carolee Schneemann in Richard Lorber, ed., "Thirteen Replies," *Dance Scope,* p. 9.

[13] Marjorie Gamso in Richard Lorber, ed., "Thirteen Replies," *Dance Scope,* p. 10.





The Dancer

Interviewer: Curtis L. Carter
James Cunningham is the artistic director of the Acme Dance Company.

Curtis Carter: Where in the scope of dance do you see your work?

James Cunningham: I thought for some time that what I really wanted to bring into my work was the idea that really everything that moves is dancing, and, therefore, I can include in what I do not only stylized movement (which is usually thought of as dance movement) but also natural movement, work movement, and the movement of prop, of films, of light. Behind it all is the idea that basically everything is moving, because everything is changing. Even rocks are very slowly moving as they erode. So it's a very large concept about what dance is. And where that fits into the scope of dance, I don't know. I mean, certainly, I find a lot of dancing boring, because it's too merely physical, and I find it emotionally and intellectually very limited. My desire has always been to create a form which integrates the body, the mind, the emotion. It is just in my nature as a person to do that. It's challenging to me. That's why yoga is so interesting to me, because it is concerned with doing just that. Having come from the theatre and having acted and directed for a long time, I was sort of surprised when people thought what I was doing was really part of the mainstream of what had always been done in the theatre, the things that interested me in terms of total theatre—like the Greek tragedies, Shakespeare and Molière, all of which combined music, dancing, singing, acting. So I always think of what we're doing as just part of that, and in that context dance as it is usually thought of came to seem rather limited. Now that may have to do with the fact that many dancers are like athletes, and I was always a terrible athlete. I guess I was developing more emotionally and intellectually, and therefore when I realized very strongly that I wanted to dance and move, I certainly wanted to bring all that other personal resource into it. And it is true that the manipulation of the body is a thing in itself to many dancers. But this concept of total theatre is really what I conceive of in terms of dance.

Curtis Carter: How do you feel about ballet as a dance form today?

James Cunningham: I start out with the premise that people have always wanted to dance. This is one of the reasons I use rock music and rock dancing in my pieces because I want to keep it in touch with the natural folk dancing of this time. So, to move to your

a dance-choreographer speaks: an interview with james cunningham

question, I think ballet is a wonderful *technique*. It's a wonderfully clear and very thorough way of articulating the body. But I find most ballets a little frivolous and sort of irrelevant. Given its elegance and the whole eighteenth century feeling of style, I don't think it's able to deal with many aspects of life and feeling, which have arisen in this century. For instance, ballet definitely tends to be up into the air. It doesn't deal with earth energy, with the whole area of the pelvis, sexuality, all of that area which is so strong in America, and, I suppose that which the whole black culture has made us very, very aware of. Now at this time when blacks and whites are really beginning to integrate, I think it's very hard in the ballet style to deal with that whole lower register of earth, sex, that kind of thing.

Curtis Carter: How do your training methods for dancing differ from others?

James Cunningham: I very much believe in every class combining technique with improvisation. I have long felt that one of the real problem areas in dance training is the obsession with technique. It is stressed too much and is made sort of a be-all and end-all. It's like being in the army or being put into a child-parent situation. You are told what to do, and you then try to achieve it. I believe very strongly that every individual, at whatever age, should be encouraged to feel that he is a creative force, that he should have an opportunity to bring out his own natural movement. Therefore, I always improvise in my classes and I combine that with techniques for learning how to free and control both the body and the voice, because I think it's perfectly natural to combine movement and sound. We're constantly dancing on a certain level when we talk and gesture to each other. I think that to cut the voice out of dance is to limit it in a very strange way. In short, connected to my idea that really everyone is dancing, is the feeling that it should be perfectly natural to speak on the stage as part of a dance or to be able to make sounds, and for all this to be much more integrated. So, this is what I do in my classes, combining these techniques of sound and movement with improvisation. I think this may be rather different than the way dance classes were conducted in the thirties, forties, and fifties. But I think that what we're doing is very related to a lot of things that are going on now, especially in the United States. I'm talking about the strong interest in yoga and the interest in sensory awareness and the investigation into why people want to move, to sing, to do these things which all so-called primitive cultures are in touch with, although possibly not in the conscious way that we are at this point.

James Cunningham. Photo by Lois Greenfield.

Curtis Carter: How do you go about choreographing a piece?

James Cunningham: I start with a problem I'm interested in working on because I find it challenging and because I think it would be challenging for the people involved in the piece. For instance I'm now working on a study of the play of opposites with each other. To that initial concept I have added certain images like the figures of Shiva and Sakti being married, the male and female principals of the cosmos. And so forth.

Curtis Carter: What do you as an artist wish to achieve through your work?

James Cunningham: I think definitely that there are several things. Primarily, to do what is challenging to my own development.
I explore the things that are interesting to me, and then I try to think of things that would be interesting for the individuals in the company to do, and that would stretch them. As to what one wants to achieve, I think that this is related partly to the whole educational aspect of the work which interests me very much—the going into colleges and also into high schools and public schools and actually encouraging people to explore the areas of themselves which in society are often repressed after you're a child. All children naturally sing and dance and then, when they grow up, the whole intellectual emphasis is so extreme that these other parts of themselves, the intuitive, the physical, the rhythmic, get to be neglected. And that's one of the things that I hope to achieve, especially through the work that I do that involves audience participation and working with groups of people.

Curtis Carter: Where do you find source material for making dances?

James Cunningham: Well, I think you just find it everywhere. That's the fun of making anything. You suddenly realize you have all this information that you've taken in from the time you were a child and that it's now available to you for use. I'm just beginning to read again **Howarzan** by Forester. Remember when he says at the very beginning, "only connect." Well, I think that's one of the things that's always fascinating about creating anything, that you find all these connections. You make them for yourself, and you make them for the people watching you. So I find in my pieces that music I heard years ago, or music I'd heard just the other day, or experiences I'd had as a child. I find in making these connections that both yoga and psychotherapy have been extremely useful for me. My experiences with them have really taken me into myself and helped me to open up—to see clearly what is inside me and what is outside. I'm in both private and group therapy and I find that extremely rewarding.

Curtis Carter: In pieces like **First Family** you use elements from Isadora Duncan, **Swan Lake,** Mae West, and other such popular sources. How do you regard these materials in their original form?

James Cunningham: As I just said a minute ago I think that I'm concerned with connecting things, and the whole eclectic nature of my work, combining many different styles of movement and music, comes from my predilection for seeing relationships between things that very often aren't thought of as belonging together. I'm aware that Mae West

might not like it at all if she found out I was using her in this dance and especially since she appears as a very grand cow in an evening dress. (But, of course, I love her.) When I said to you before that I feel very connected with Lewis Carroll, it is because he did exactly in the nineteenth century the sort of thing that I'm doing now, what all satirists do. You take certain things of the day and you turn them upside down and you show the whole ironic aspect of them and you also show the way they connect, how one thing ties in with the other. Of course, **Swan Lake,** Mae West, and Isadora all represent different forms of dance and so there is a relationship, and a logical juxtaposition.

Curtis Carter: What attitudes do you intend to convey towards these diverse elements?

James Cunningham: I think both sympathetic and ironic ones, because I think that there's always something a little funny about anybody who's doing something which somehow they're so absorbed in that they don't see anything else. It's a little funny that Mae West has insisted for seventy years on playing the femme fatale. I mean, there are other things in life. It is also funny to me to think of all those people lost in **Swan Lake,** forever hopelessly in love with each other. Especially it's ironic if you know ballet dancers as I do and realize that behind this great love of the prince for the princess is very often quite a different relationship—one where he is quite openly gay. I hope that it's also conveyed that I feel very sympathetic. I love all these things that I put in. I'm not putting them down. I'm not saying this is ridiculous.

Curtis Carter: What is dance to you?

James Cunningham: I think that I said what dance is to me at the beginning. Essentially everything that is moving is dancing to me—and everything is moving. Every single thing has sound waves. So that's it: dance is life. I just don't want to limit it any more than that. I want to be able to have the audience in the theatre and to lift off the roof of the theatre and have them see the stars—to see things moving in new and different perspectives, so that they can understand what they themselves are doing. As Forester said, to connect what they're doing with what's going on around them and realize that they're part of the dance of life, whether they're dancing on the stage or whether they're going to the supermarket or brushing their teeth.

Curtis Carter: Where is dance in America going now?

James Cunningham: You probably really have a much better idea than I do, because I think when you're in it you're working from inside yourself essentially. Therefore, unless you're an imitator, you don't think, well, now I should do this because it is relevant. I think, however, that many of us do find that we are working in similar areas, because obviously there are certain things that are in the air now. The whole sensory awareness thing for one. The attitude toward sexuality is so much more open now. The gay thing and the new consciousness and openness of women.

Curtis Carter: What kind of audience do you like?

James Cunningham: I don't know. I think that I like all audiences. I mean, an audience is very important for the comic thing we're doing. Whether they understand it or not consciously, they are very much a part of the dance, because their response affects the whole rhythm of what happens. And that's one of the reasons I love doing comedy because it is so obvious that the audience is important and that they are making the event. They are just as important a part of the event as the performers.

Curtis Carter: Who do you admire in choreographers today?

James Cunningham: I certainly admire Yvonne Rainer. She's concerned with doing. She's very concerned with minimal movement, which interests me also very much, and with investigating very simple things like walking and running. She's just a very wide awake person and I love to watch her. I really admire Jerome Robbins, partly because he's dealt with so many different aspects of the theatre, not just confined himself to ballet but has done musicals, and many different kinds of things. He's directed as well. He's worked with actors. And I only wish he'd do something in which he combined all these things, because there's no doubt that he knows a great deal about the theatre. If he could, I think it would be excellent. And I also admire Martha Graham very much. I find her very mysterious and rather humorless, but I

think that she is a true theatre person. She really conceives of what she does in terms of the whole theatre. I'm talking about her awareness of lighting and set and costumes, and her ability to take the things that were interesting to her and find an objective correlative for them in myth, so that they become relevant to many people. I think it's admirable.

Curtis Carter: In your gym pieces you begin and end with a warm-up and include a place in the dance for everyone. Why?

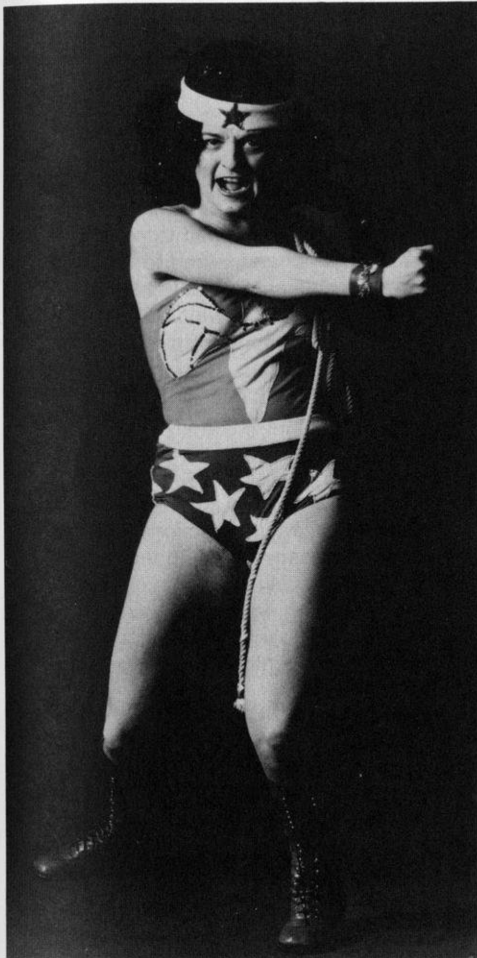
James Cunningham: Well, because of what I've said before. I want very much to make clear to audiences that of course they are dancers and that they can dance and that it's a perfectly natural thing to do and to invite them to do that, because all children find it natural, until they start to be told that, well, only *this* is dance. Or, you can't dance unless you have dance technique or whatever, and I'm against that. I'm for encouraging people to react much more spontaneously and I find that when people stretch and warm up both vocally and physically, then they see something that we do for them. Physically, emotionally, and intellectually they've been brought to the state where they're tuned in to what's going to happen. It's not as if they just came in and were still worrying about their taxes or their love life or whatever. Then at the end when we dance to the rock music, we bring the energies together again the way we began it, centering all that has happened. And it's just a very good feeling. I like to do that. It's one of the things we do that I really feel good about.

Curtis Carter: What is the place of dance in education of children? What kind of dance training and dance experiences would you like to see developing?

James Cunningham: Well, of course, I think that dance is very important for young children and also in high schools and in colleges—and simply to keep awake that whole natural love of movement that children and young people have. I think that in England they are probably a little further ahead than we are here because in the primary schools there they teach Laban's methods. Laban is truly concerned with the roots of movement, the really basic reasons that all people at all times have been interested in movement. I think that in teaching his ideas

Maisie Paradocks, Acme Dance Co. Photo by Joel Gordon.

about the different kinds of effort shapes—the whole experience and the whole range of movement through gliding, floating, ringing, pressing, thrusting, tapping, flicking—that children are encouraged to explore *their whole range.* One of the things I'm always doing is stressing to everyone that they have this huge range, vocally and physically, in terms of strength, in terms of delicacy, and that it's just waiting for them to play on it like a keyboard, and that it is silly to restrict themselves to just a little area. It reminds me of what my psychiatrist sometimes used to say to me. It was a quote from **Auntie Mame:** "Life is a banquet and most poor sons of bitches are starving to death." I think that's perfectly true. One is aware as a child that life is a banquet. Therefore, we should encourage children to improvise, to learn that using many forms of movement and sound can be a good thing. And then to teach technique with that, but always to put the stress on the creative energy of the individual and not just turn a child into a little soldier who imitates you doing pirouettes or whatever. I think that psychologically that just does not result in the freeing of the child's creative energy.



The real influence on me as a child, from the time I was about eight until I was about twenty-one, was a very amazing woman in Toronto whom I worked with. She was involved in doing very much what I'm interested in, this whole total theatre thing, involving singing and dancing and acting. She made a tremendous impact on me and on a number of other children. She reinforced my predilection as a child for just playing—for being different animals and different kinds of people and all of that. She was a major influence. Now as for others. As I said before, I definitely think of Lewis Carroll as a real influence. I love Alice and I see a great deal in those books. There is, too, the stimulus of yoga and psychotherapy, which I mentioned. And also the many things I learned in the theatre. I think Graham has had an influence on me. I love her sense of the whole world, and I love the passion of it. It gets to me, really—and more than, say, Merce Cunningham's work which I find much more intellectual and rather dry. And Shakespeare: I'm obviously not alone in seeing his great genius. □

Maisie Paradocks, Barbara Ellmann, dancer. Photo by Joel Gordon.

by Jack Morrison
Associate Director, Arts in Education Program, The JDR 3rd Fund.

(The editors of **Arts in Society** wanted an article on institutionalizing dance, its effect and consequences. In discussing this intriguing problem with Shirley Ririe, Co-Director with Joan Woodbury of the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company based in Salt Lake City, I began to explore what we thought "institutionalizing" was as it came about over the last twenty years or so with the Ririe-Woodbury Company. A dialogue began to emerge, and the following is a somewhat edited interview with Shirley Ririe.

The Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company tours nationally throughout the year primarily for the Dance Touring Program and the Artists-in-the Schools Program of the National Endowment for the Arts. In the last two years they have established residencies and given performances in twenty-two states and sixty-six communities.)

Jack Morrison: You and Joan were teaching at the University of Utah when you decided to create—institutionalize if you will—your Company. Why did you start the Company?

Shirley Ririe: We didn't *start* a company. It happened. Many students at the University of Utah don't move away when they graduate. They stuck around in the community and wanted to dance. We wanted to work with them because Joan and I liked to work together. The alumni, naturally, had experience and technical skills which allowed us to do more advanced choreography with greater demands on the dancers. It was just common sense. We didn't back into it. It was more like taking advantage of opportunities. One thing led to another.

During the 50's we joined with others to form "Choreodancers" which functioned as a non-professional company. Then in the mid-60's Alwin Nikolais and Murray Louis encouraged us to begin thinking seriously about forming a professional company. I think it was their faith and prodding which gave us the courage to "think big".

Jack Morrison: Wasn't there enough to do at the University with teaching, choreographing and concertizing on the Campus?

Shirley Ririe: Of course. There still is and it's exciting work. I guess Joan and I are born teachers and we love it. The University is our artistic and professional base, a part of us. But professionally we continued to grow.

institutionalizing dance

We needed a new, more demanding level of quality of performance in addition to, beyond undergraduate work, more professional.

Jack Morrison: What's the difference in working with your own company compared to your work on the campus?

Shirley Ririe: The needs are clear. Artistic and educational needs aren't clouded. Quite rightly, student needs are paramount on the campus, process is more important than product. A good learning experience is not necessarily geared to what's best for public performance. With our Company everyone is working for a common goal, and we have the time, freedom, scope and commitment to achieve excellence in performance of our own choreographic works. Not only do we have total commitment, but we have the opportunity to rehearse at decent hours of the day.

And there's no turn-over problem. Our personnel is pretty well stabilized. There's time to build the company on common experience and understanding. We know how to work together. We communicate among ourselves very well. This way the whole company adds to the work. I've mentioned the word "time" fairly often. Maybe time is the great gift to come from "institutionalizing."

Jack Morrison: Were you conscious of a need to institutionalize at the time?

Shirley Ririe: In a dream form we were. You know—"Wouldn't it be wonderful *if*? If we could *just* work and perform. If we could just do a piece over and over and grow with the new work! If we only had a chance to develop as a company!" There was no grand design—consciously at least. We did long for a company and our dreams, it turns out, were forming it.

Jack Morrison: What were the problems you didn't anticipate?

Shirley Ririe: Jealousy. Maintaining the new Department of Ballet and Modern Dance at the University apart from the Physical Education Department as well as other developments was something we had worked very hard for. The problem, a good problem, as yet not entirely solved, is the relationship of a wholly professionalized company to the Dance Department. The problem is not either/or but both/and. For the most part the dance majors want teachers who are in demand professionally and reflect professionalism in their teaching. But naturally there are conflicts. We're still working on it. I hear that, at least in some instances, the sciences and engineering have solved the problem well

with research and development centers near the campus. I'll be the first to let you know when it's solved. We've got to do it.

Jack Morrison: Do you feel a need for further institutionalization?

Shirley Ririe: I know we ought to. But we want to keep our freedom. Right now we don't have to ask for permission to do anything from anybody but ourselves. Three years ago we added a manager who is full-time now. Having a manager relieves Joan and me from a lot of detail and gives us time. Actually we are trying to get along with less, a minimal amount of institutionalization. We can do this because we have a home base—the university. And we have only adequate salaries and accept communal living on tour. We're gypsies. Or, to say it another way, we are pioneers. Like them, we have our freedom, but we can only be pioneers so long. We know we've got to institutionalize at another level sometime in the future. We could raise more money, have higher salaries, have space of our own, and so on by having a board of directors—but then, there you are, you have a board of directors! You have someone else to report to, be accountable to. We're not ready for that yet.

Jack Morrison: Then institutionalization, so far, has expanded your creative development?

Shirley Ririe: The more you can keep the company together, the more you can do, the more you can learn. Now every member of the company is a cracker-jack teacher!

Jack Morrison: But after a while, do you think institutionalizing will tend to corrupt? R-W be embedded in plastic?

Shirley Ririe: Not with the chemistry of the moment. Change is our business. We've doubled our touring schedule every year. Maybe we're spoiled—having such a free hand. And it's the relationship with the University that's made it possible. They've provided space and salaries as we grew. And it's a constant source of talent. We have to work continuously to improve an ecology that maintains a balance for the company with all the forces of institutionalization. But that's balance, a *dynamic* balance, not an embedment in plastic or anything else!

Shirley Ririe. Photo by Elizabeth Morris.

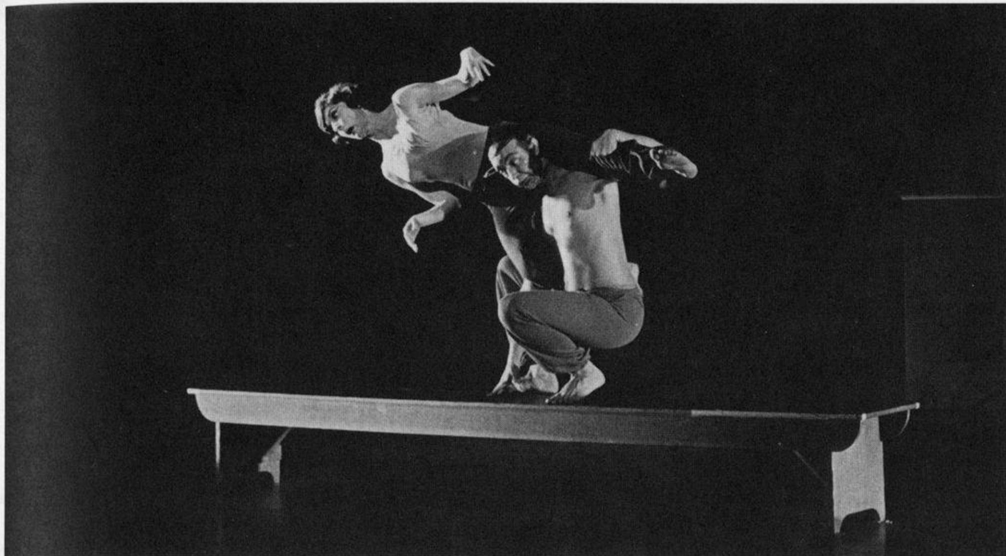
Jack Morrison: I don't get the impression you'll ever get mired down in anything.

Shirley Ririe: You're dead right about that!

Jack Morrison: What are the characteristics R-W has developed as an institution?

Shirley Ririe: An unusual performance format without a break—no intermissions. We call it our "non-stop show"! This not only takes careful programming but a company who is adept at quick changes and technicians who use media skillfully. We are known for our use of multi-media. We learned the basics from Nik (Alwin Nikolais). His fundamental theatrical concept of dance is based in the simultaneity of space, time, shape and motion. It's our basic philosophy and follows his teaching. We came out of that. It was a clear definition of dance that lent a clarity of approach for us. In all this, I can't tell you how important it was for us to have the university as an incubator. The talented people developed here, the opportunity to use space, develop and produce pieces there and transfer all this to a company was indispensable. We had no front money, but we were later able to buy costumes, props, and equipment. It gave us a solidarity.

I've just thought of something. In all our tour-



Play It As It Rings, Shirley Ririe and Joan Woodbury, choreographers. Dancers: Shirley Ririe and Dee Winterton. Photo by Stan Green.

ing, playing arts centers and school residencies, we are institutionalizing at the other end—the audiences we play to and work with. With colleges, arts councils and school districts, we are building an institution of dance throughout the country. Not just audiences but people and organizations who make dance a regular part of their lives. We're an institution helping dance build institutions of dance in the community. What do you think of that?

Jack Morrison: I like that. It's a creative way of looking at what you're doing beyond performance—because of the performance and your teaching, something goes on after you've left a community.

Shirley Ririe: That's right. We see what has developed when we return to the same area the following year. We are reaping the growth, the institutionalizing of the dance throughout the country.

The real backbone of our touring is "Artists-in-the-Schools"; this is an incredible program which is largely due to the vision and skill of Charles Rinehart, who institutionalized, if you will, a representative group of dance companies (AADC, the American Association of Dance Companies) into a successful program which offers the best possible in teaching and performing to the elementary and secondary schools of this country.

I just said it's more than developing audiences. It changes lives. Dance—movement—provides an outlet, that lets people be spontaneous, sometimes for the first time. And they are different after that. We can do it because the whole Artist-in-the-Schools Program has been institutionalized by making the schools ready for our residency. Then we get to know them by working with them in the classroom. They know you as people, recognize you in performance. And we know them. It's the whole process Gene Wenner has put in his booklet, **Dance in the Schools.** We institutionalize the institution which develops the audience. They are wonderful audiences.

Jack Morrison: I think that's because you have such an infectious way of working together, teaching together and performing together. R-W isn't just warm and friendly; you are genuinely and deeply concerned, open and spontaneous with each other with a professional discipline that is a joy to experience. How did you get that way?

Shirley Ririe: I guess Joan and I just always worked like that—it's catching.

Jack Morrison: It sure is. □

by Ellen W. Jacobs

Ellen Jacobs has written about dance for the New York Times and Changes Magazine among other publications.

> *Once upon a ballet, critics were so anxious to get people to see a dance performance, any dance performance, that if it moved they tended to be kind. They were fostering the art itself—which was necessary—not the practise of the art. This is over.*
>
> —Clive Barnes
> **The New York Times**
> Sunday, September 28, 1975

At the end of a sold-out performance of the Paul Taylor Dance Company this past June, the audience jumped to its feet. Everyone was clapping wildly when suddenly a friend grabbed my arm. "Oh my God! Look, it's him!" she whispered excitedly. "ROBERT REDFORD. Dance has gotta have made it."

Actually, dance has more than made it. Dance has become the "in" thing to see, along with film. It is now chic to be able to name dancers or to be seen with Alvin Ailey or Joffrey fan buttons pinned to your lapel.

Recognizing that dance is so popular it can even sell magazines, **Newsweek** and **Time** decided to cash in on the art's current success and run cover stories last May. **Newsweek** reported that audience attendance at dance performances had jumped 1500% in just ten years—from one million in 1965 to fifteen million in 1975.

In Soho lofts, museum and gallery spaces, small theaters, churches and grade school gymnasiums, as well as in cultural cathedrals such as the New York State Theater, the Metropolitan Opera House or the City Center of Music and Drama, they are packing audiences in. Where once you could buy a cheap seat knowing there would be scads of empty expensive ones to steal into, now even high priced tickets must be purchased way in advance. The ticket line for American Ballet Theatre snaked around and around the New York State Theater last summer. It was a scalper's holiday.

So what happened? Why has America suddenly fallen in love with dance? And then, perhaps a more revealing question—how could we have not loved it all along?

An obvious clue is found in the arrival of Rudolph Nureyev, whose exotic face, fabulous body, air ripping leaps, flaring nostrils and inexhaustible energy grabbed the American imagination with a fierceness generally reserved for movie or rock stars.

His nervy defection from Russia made news, real news, not the artsy stuff that is habitually shoved to the back of the book. Nureyev's "leap to freedom" raised him to the level of a

why everybody suddenly loves dance

political hero, lending him an aura rarely enjoyed by serious American artists. He became an instant name not only by virtue of the drama of his dancing but also by virtue of the drama of his life.

In addition, there was his on-stage love affair with Margot Fonteyn, the legend-making rapport between an older woman and a young tiger. His partnership was supposed to have inspired her to new life, to even greater artistic heights. The couple aroused our curiosity, fed our imaginations and helped fill our famous need for glamorous stars.

Nureyev, yes. But it is also important to consider when the phenomenon of Nureyev came about. For the answer to the question of why America is suddenly interested in dance is inextricably linked to when America became interested. Nureyev's arrival in the sixties coincided with changes in the whole social and moral climate of America, changes that made an acceptance of dance possible for the first time in our country's history.

The war in Vietnam, America's economic affluence, the fear of nuclear annihilation, and the growing threat of a computerized and faceless society each played its own role in forcing us to seriously question principles which we had always considered givens. Political, economic and moral assumptions underwent severe scrutiny.

It was during this period that America finally began to loosen her chastity belt. What used to go on behind closed doors guiltily was now going public proudly. America was shedding the skins of her puritanical past, a past that had religiously taught its children to divide themselves into three separate parts: mind, body and spirit. Flesh was naturally evil and a source of shame. A concern with and display of the body had traditionally met with severe criticism or, at best, with nervous snickers.

It seems reasonable then, if not almost too obvious, that an art form dependent on the body for expression, an art whose message is articulated by the body would threaten the very moral fiber of the nation's conscience.

No matter how pristine the ballet, how virginal the ballerina or gallant the danseur, dance is about the body, the body as it moves in space and time, but nonetheless, the body. Our eyes are focused on the legs, arms, torso, neck and back as the dancer dips, turns, runs, leaps. No matter how sexually innocent the movement, it still stirs a sensual response in its audience.

Dance certainly is not always about sex or even love, but it is always sensual, and appreciation of it requires an unrepressed spirit, an ability to transcend our trained prejudice against the animal responses of our muscles. It is only through kinesthetic empathy—a

sympathetic muscular response to the dancers' leaps, jumps, prowlings—that we can appreciate the art. A mind and spirit estranged from its body cannot see dance.

Since movement is not only an expression of life, but actually the definition of it—does not the movement of the heart distinguish life from death?—it would seem unnatural not to respond to an art based on what is most natural to us. If we have not loved dance all along, it is because our natural impulses have been inhibited.

Things are changing. Americans are rediscovering their bodies. Think of the numbers of people now flocking to exercise classes, yoga, ballet and modern dance classes. The growing obsession to have beautiful and agile bodies is obvious in the numbers of people that have taken to jogging, playing tennis, joining Y's, health clubs and swim clubs.

Our growing acceptance of sexuality is also apparent in the growing informality of fashion. Women's bodies are no longer girdled beneath layers of elastic and plastic bones; men's necks are no longer choked by tight ties or starched collars. Swim suits have been reduced to a series of occasional band-aids. The look is *au naturale*.

Once upon a time, but not very long ago, ballet was considered as feminine an activity as a tea party. Audience figures now show an equal number of men as women seated at performances. Gay Liberation and the Women's Movement have had at least an oblique influence in encouraging this new male interest in dance by helping to change some of the social attitudes that had once prejudiced men against the art.

By trying to eradicate the lines dividing male and female roles or defining sensibility by

gender, the Women's Movement encouraged men to allow their emotional sensitivity to surface, a liberation which also freed them to appreciate art without fear of raising society's eyebrows.

The male dancer had been traditionally regarded as a "queer" or "faggot." His assumed homosexuality assigned him marginal status in a society intolerant of nonconformity. Gay Liberation's relatively successful attempt to take some of the social onus off homosexuality by arguing it to be an alternative life style instead of a form of deviant behavior allowed "straight" men to enjoy dance without feeling identified with an art form inhabited by social outcasts. Where ten years ago I would have found a violinist or poet seated next to me at a City Ballet performance, now there are salesmen, bankers, and lawyers, who can drop dancers' names as easily as they can those of baseball players or football stars.

The dance explosion also has important economic roots. In addition to the relatively recent support from the Mellon, Ford and Rockefeller foundations, the art has received significant financial subsidies from both state and federal sources. It was in 1965 that the government, most notably the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts, began to put significant amounts of money into dance. It was a remarkably visionary and sensitive response to feeling that something was in the air. Implicit in this much needed financial encouragement was an official approval of the art, and a spiritual reassurance that the government was taking dance seriously.

Tzaddik, Eliot Feld, choreographer. Courtesy: WGBH, **Dance for Camera,** Boston.

The government's investment was a shrewd one. The National Endowment's Coordinated Residency Touring Program, which began in 1967 with four dance companies touring two states for a total of eight weeks, had a federal subsidy of $25,000. This year there are seventy-one dance companies participating in the program. Their combined weeks of touring are 360. The federal investment, which only represents one third of the company fee—the local sponsor picks up the rest—is now $1.3 million.

Yes, dance has happened. Is happening. Everyone wants to become part of the act. Consider the audiences perched at the edge of their seats as the Ailey company socks it to 'em. There are times at the end of a performance of **Revelations** that I fully expect audiences to scream out "Hit 'em again. Hit 'em again. Harder. Harder." Brandishing rediscovered libidos, audiences are demanding that dance fulfill all their erotic fantasies and desires for personal stardom.

It is difficult for the once love-starved companies not to play to the crowd that now seems to be loving them so well. But as a result much of dance has become hip and easily accessible. Themes, lifted from the newspapers and popular culture, are served artistically undigested to our hungry ids. We eat it up.

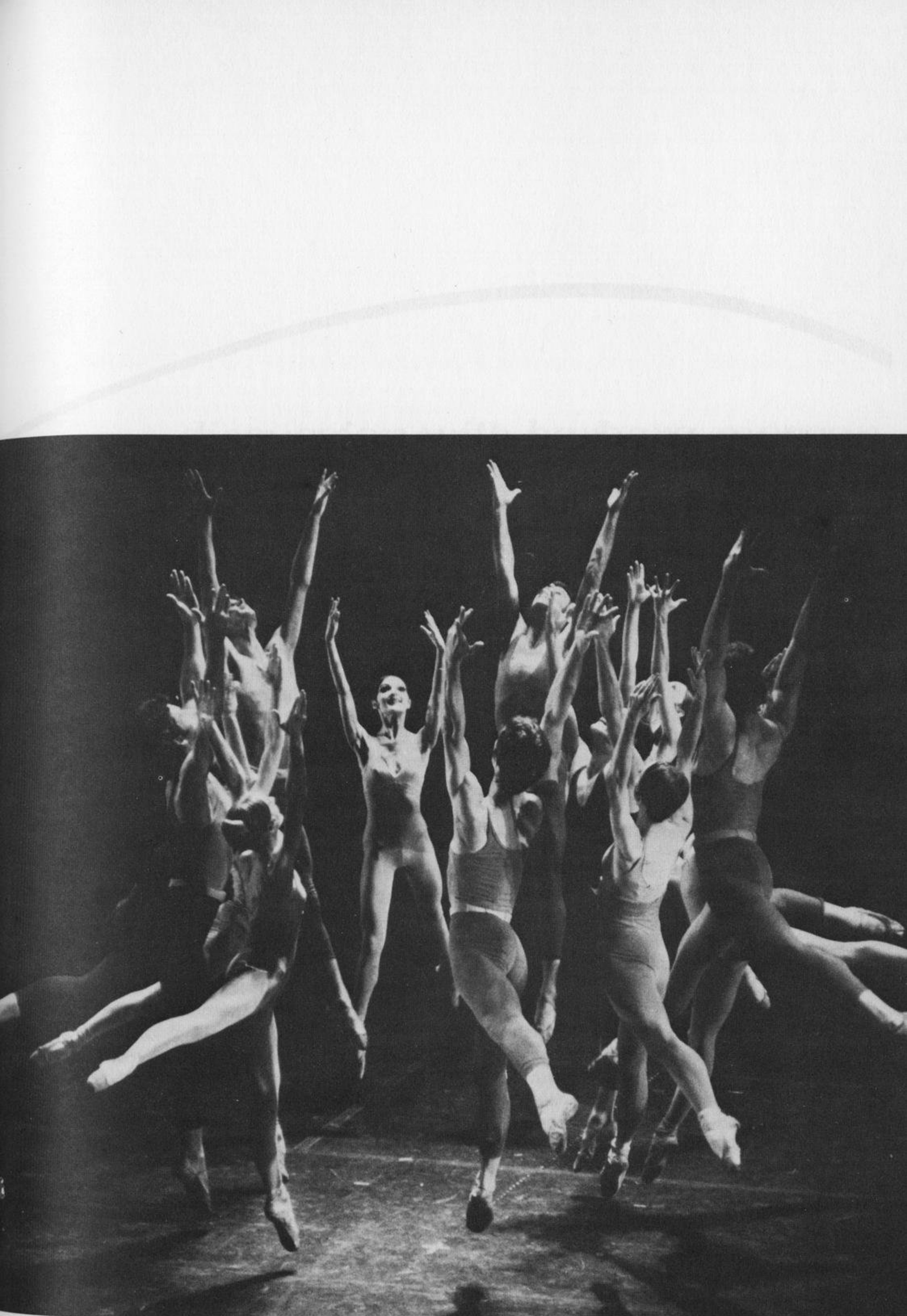
The success of Robert Joffrey's **Astarte,** the first ballet created to rock music inspired a rash of followers, mostly unsuccessful attempts to prove that ballet is as hip and now as WINS radio and as easy to grasp as TV commercials. Unlike Twyla Tharp, few choreographers are able to make ballets which succeed in using popular culture to make a more profound comment on the culture itself. Having had a taste of public love, many choreographers are now opting for it, and, in both senses of the word, selling out for it. It is not easy to resist making and performing art designed to win instant wows.

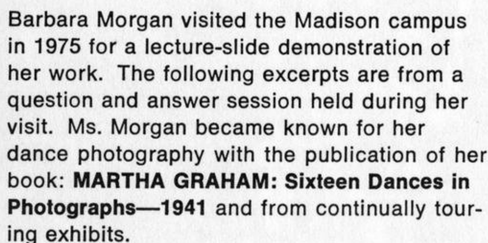
My possessive love of dance—I was there when the houses were empty—resents audiences applauding and hooting at every virtuoso turn of events. Not only do they break the magic of the moment, but also I fear that their wild interruptions will seduce artists into a kind of Broadway showoffsmanship.

Yet the concern that artists will create art and performers will perform for the sound of applause is probably unnecessarily cynical. Such salesmen will be quickly blotted out by history. Great art will survive temporary public negligence. Look at Martha Graham.

So despite the new audience's poor theater manners, the growing number of dance freaks is a happy, if not healthy sign not only for dance, but for America as well. We are becoming less uptight, more tuned into ourselves as total beings. We are finally able to enjoy the art which is most natural to us. □

Trinity, Gerald Arpino, choreographer. Joffrey Ballet, City Center.





Barbara Morgan visited the Madison campus in 1975 for a lecture-slide demonstration of her work. The following excerpts are from a question and answer session held during her visit. Ms. Morgan became known for her dance photography with the publication of her book: **MARTHA GRAHAM: Sixteen Dances in Photographs—1941** and from continually touring exhibits.

Some of my experiences when photographing dance.

The beginning was 1935 when some friends of ours, Julien and Marian Bryan, were visiting. (Julien was Director of the International Film Foundation from 1945 to his death in 1974). I had just seen one of Martha's concerts. I can't remember whether it was **Primitive Mysteries** or **Frontier,** but I was very excited and it aroused memory of my experiences in the Southwest, where my husband and I had so recently seen Indian Dance Ceremonials, that I was still tuned in on it. So at dinner, talking about Martha's concert, Julien said, "Well, of course, we know her very well and Marian gets her to come out to Sarah Lawrence College occasionally to teach the dance students." Then Marian said, "Tomorrow Julien is going to be filming a documentary of Martha's rehearsal. Why don't you get your camera and come along?" Well I did. During his filming there was a moment of peace when Julien had stopped to put new film in his camera. I asked Martha very directly, "By any chance have you been influenced by the Indian and Spanish dance ceremonials in the Southwest?" I said I recently had the great pleasure of seeing her dance and I had that sudden intuition. She said, "Absolutely, that's one of the greatest inspirations in my entire life." I said, "I'd like to do a book on your work." She said, "Sure I'll work wtih you" It was just like that.

Before we actually started on the book, we discussed our experiences. It was kind of eerie to find that both of us had comparable experiences that had influenced our approach.

When I was an art student at U.C.L.A. our art historian, who was a profound scholar in Oriental Art and Philosophy, taught us their ancient canon of "rhythmic vitality." Also in design composition their need for negative space to receive the "trajectories of movement."

This all connected with my early childhood experiences, when my father would tell me that "everything is made of dancing atoms." He started my life-long search for the "invisible life forces within the visible." I continue to feel motion as a result of emotion, and therefore the crux of art composition.

discussion with barbara morgan

Emotional energy (spiritual, psychic—whatever you call it) certainly is the preceding catalyst for the physical.

Also in my art classes, there was a Japanese student who explained "ESORAGOTO." It involves getting into the mood for a painter who wants to portray a "tiger" or a "bird in flight", or whatever. The artist sits and meditates to get into imaginary empathy with the image to be created. Then, when he feels he "is a tiger" he picks up his brush and paints the tiger that is in his mind's eye.

I painted this way before I got into photography, and naturally I carried this "ESORAGOTO" system into photography, which we call "pre-visioning." Similarly, Martha told me that before she goes on stage, "she ceases to be Martha Graham" and becomes the character she is to dance.

In searching for the essence, and not just the documentary fact, I would go to many performances and rehearsals and then discuss the meaning of the dance with the dancer. I try to be true to their symbolism as well as my own interpretation.

So, after this absorption, I would pre-vision the basic gestures of the dance in terms of my own lighting interpretations. To do this I didn't shoot in the distraction of the performance, but with my own studio controlled lighting and timing.

In preparing to shoot, while I would be setting up lights and camera, Martha would be getting her costume and make-up on. Then we would signal "ready" and sit separately and quietly in the shooting area, simultaneously getting into the mood, rhythm, and pre-visioning before starting.

Charles Weidman and Doris Humphrey

Charles Weidman was dominantly whimsical, but also profound and Doris Humphrey was lyrical, imaginative and philosophical. I didn't philosophize with them as much as I did with Martha Graham and José Limón, tho I had great admiration for the creativity and their interpretations of life's spectrum of comedy to tragedy with countless playful explorations in between.

How was your relationship with José Limón?

He was a very special and sensitive person, very honest and outgoing. He confided to me some things that touched me deeply. He told me that when he was a very little child, he was horrified when he learned that he was Indian on his mother's side and Mexican-Spanish on his father's side, for he was humiliated at that time at the cruelty of the

Spanish. But the Spanish part of his life made him feel that the Indian side was too simplistic. From both sides there was a certain amount of hatred, so he was torn. He said that as he grew up he began to realize the complexities of life all over the world and that there is nothing about life that is simple and "pure." He began to see that there was a necessary inner logic of acceptance about these tragedies. He wanted to go beyond them, into affirmation of life. Just as in Greek drama you accept sin or tragedy and you say, "All right, I accept this, but then we will make a better life emerge from it." This experience caused him to compose his dance, *MEXICAN SUITE: Indio, Conquistador, Peon, Revolutionario.* He got very much from his own ancestors. For Indio, his gestures would involve the union of Sky and Earth, Sun Father and Earth Mother. Conquistador was brutal, yet elegant. Peon was excruciating agony and tension while Revolutionario was out to protest, militant. Limón said it was like therapy for him to reveal these inner agonies. Then he did these utterly whimsical things like *Cowboy Song,* with which I made a photomontage because it had so many crisscrosses and eruptions. I did this in the spirit of multiplicity because it has so many meanings in it.

Advice for Women Artists?

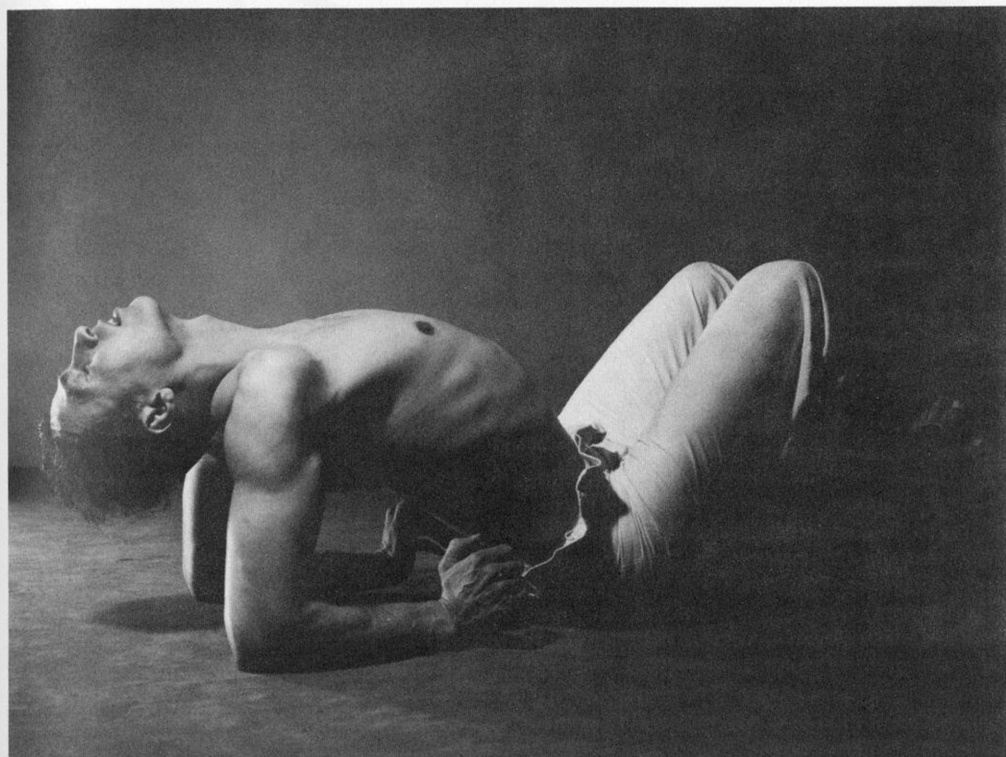
Don't give up, work like hell! If you have children as well as a career like I had, I recommend that you work out a system. I worked out a system which kept me from going crazy, which I called "The Three Channel System." FIRST: Responsibility to take care of the kids; SECOND: my own creativity; THIRD, all the other stuff, like community work.

When it was either/or, Babies, or Art, my husband was marvelous because he helped so much. Actually, when they were babies it was harder. My husband would take care of the kids at night, and I would go into the dark room. As the kids got older, we built a house and designed it as a work place; my husband had a study; the children had a work place; and I had a studio-darkroom. We worked out a plan where we all respected each other's privacy. They didn't barge in on me, and I didn't barge in on them (most of the time)!

Of necessity, I taught my brain to be able to think on several levels simultaneously. I'd remember, "yes, I've got to go buy some cheese"; but at the same time I'd be having an idea in my "mind's eye" like, "oh, boy, maybe I can make an interesting composition if I do so and so." So I could get a creative concept going and simultaneously remember to do the chores I was supposed to be doing, and keep them going in sequence, without mutual destruction.

There was a further reason for doing this. Besides photographing dance, I was working on photo-montage. When you are doing photo-montage, you are interrelating various images. You are superimposing them or integrating them to convey complexities, as visual metaphor. Well, that's what I was (and am) doing, literally. I live like a coordinated photo-montage. It is the opposite of schizophrenia—and it wasn't a fight; it was an acceptance and harmony.

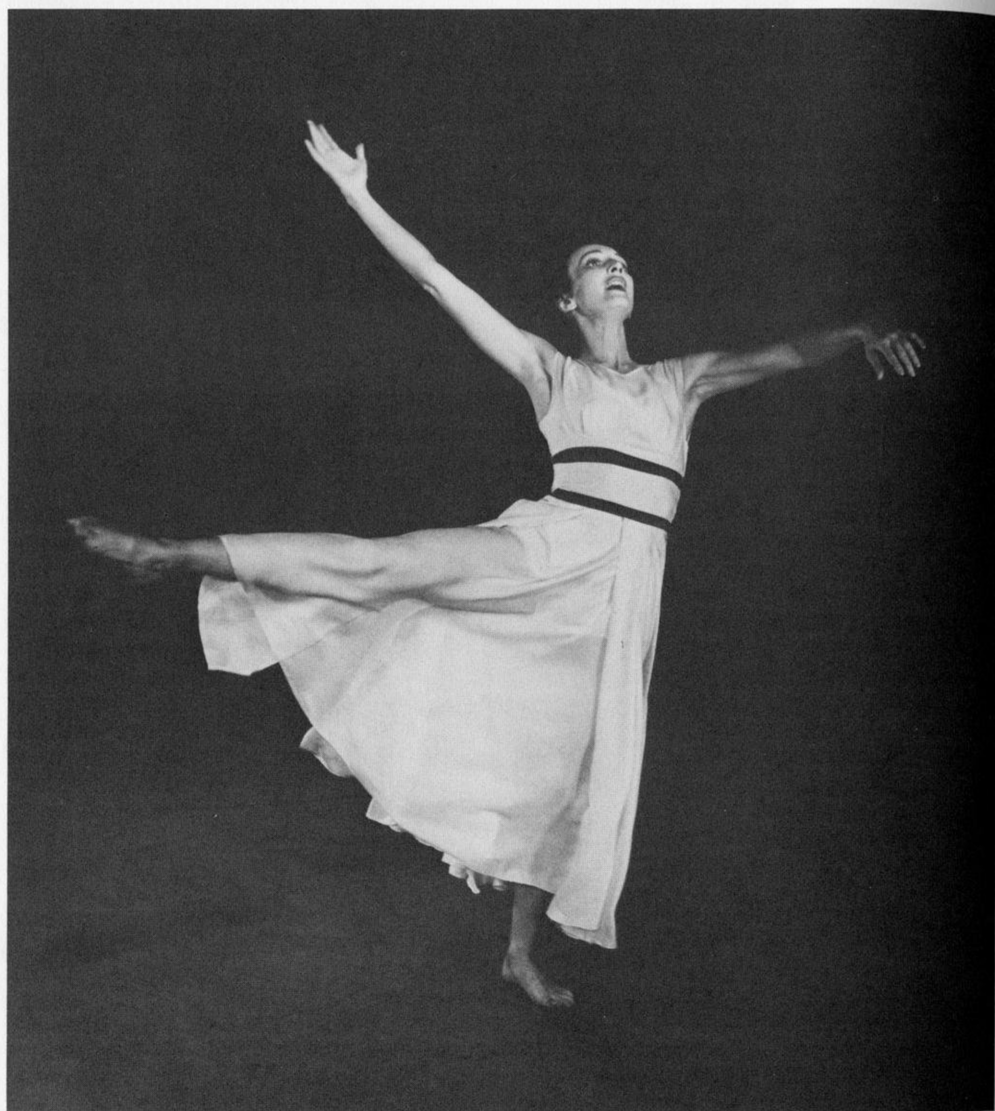
Peon from **Mexican Suite,** 1944. José Limon, dancer. Photo by Barbara Morgan.



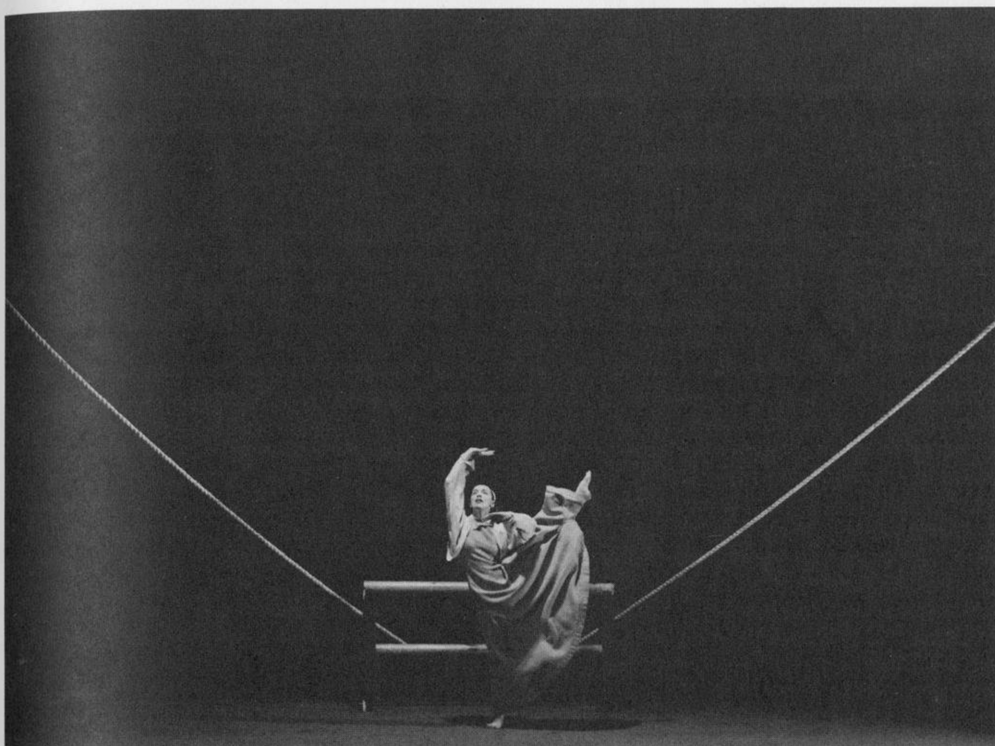
Portfolio of Dance Photography

Elpenitente, Martha Graham, choreographer. Solo: Erick Hawkins, **El Flagellante.**
Photograph by Barbara Morgan, 1940.

Totem Ancester, Merce Cunningham, dancer. Photograph by Barbara Morgan, 1942.

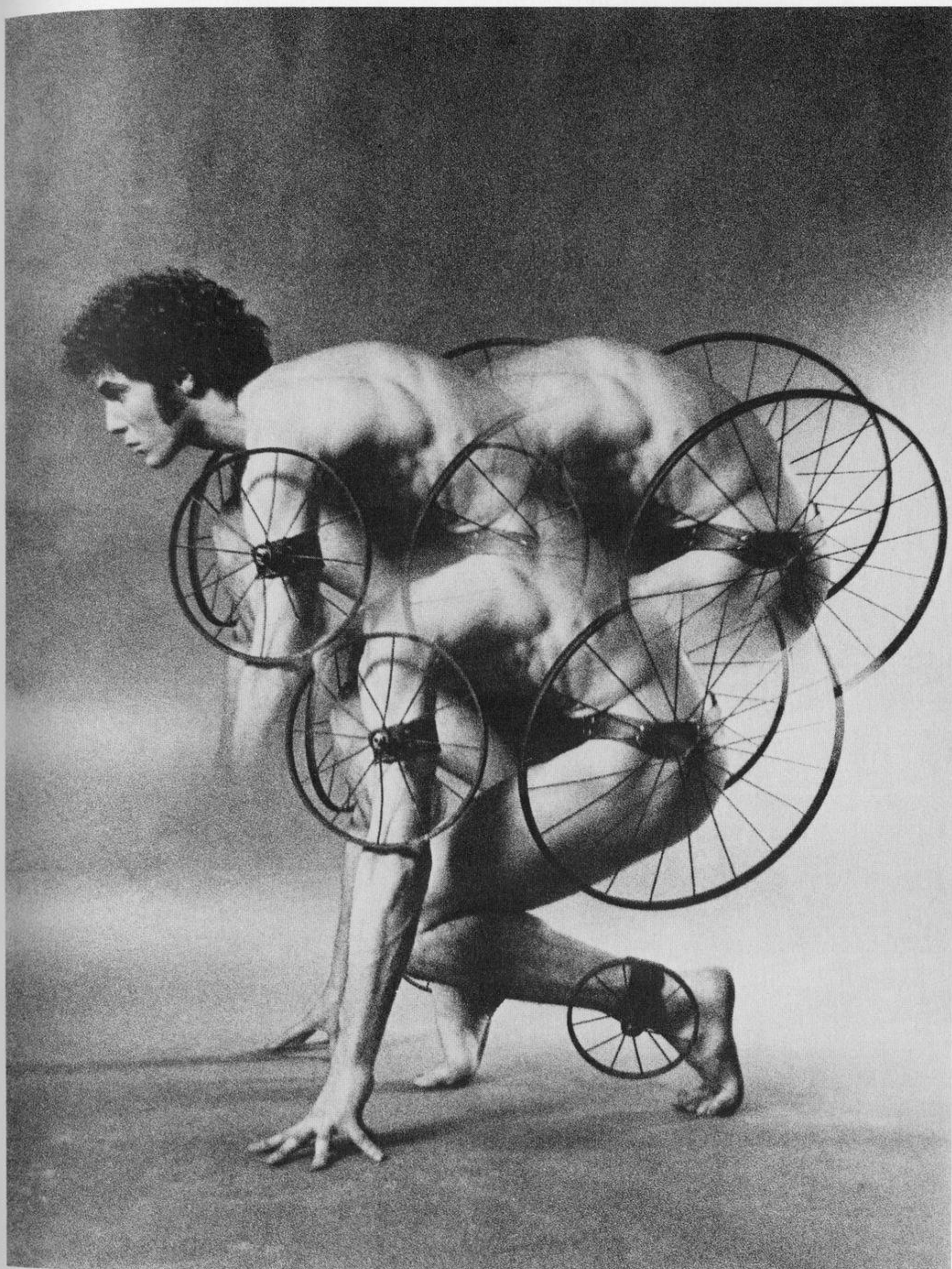


Passacaglia, Doris Humphrey, dancer. Photograph by Barbara Morgan, 1938.

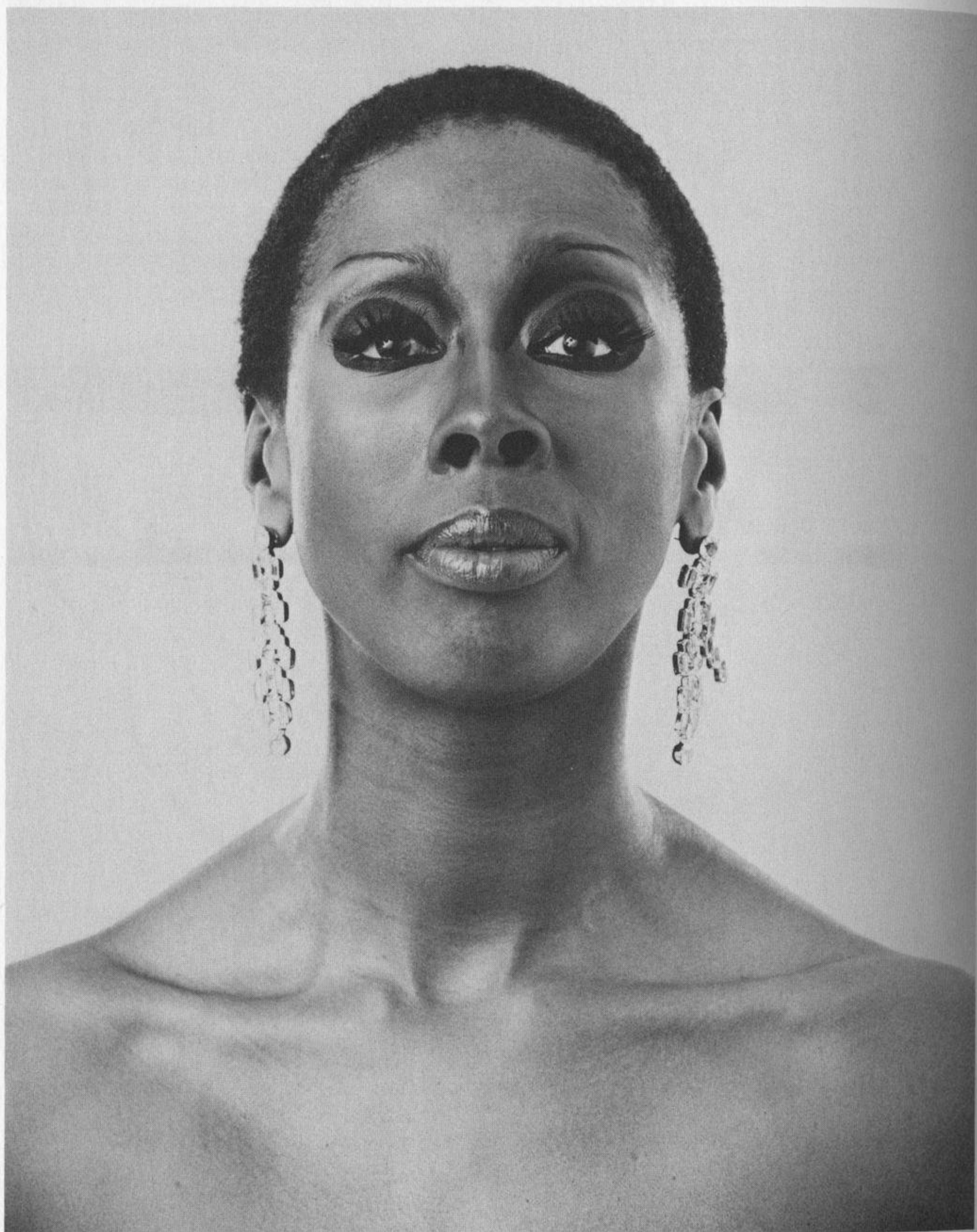


Frontier, Martha Graham, choreographer. Photograph by Barbara Morgan, 1935.

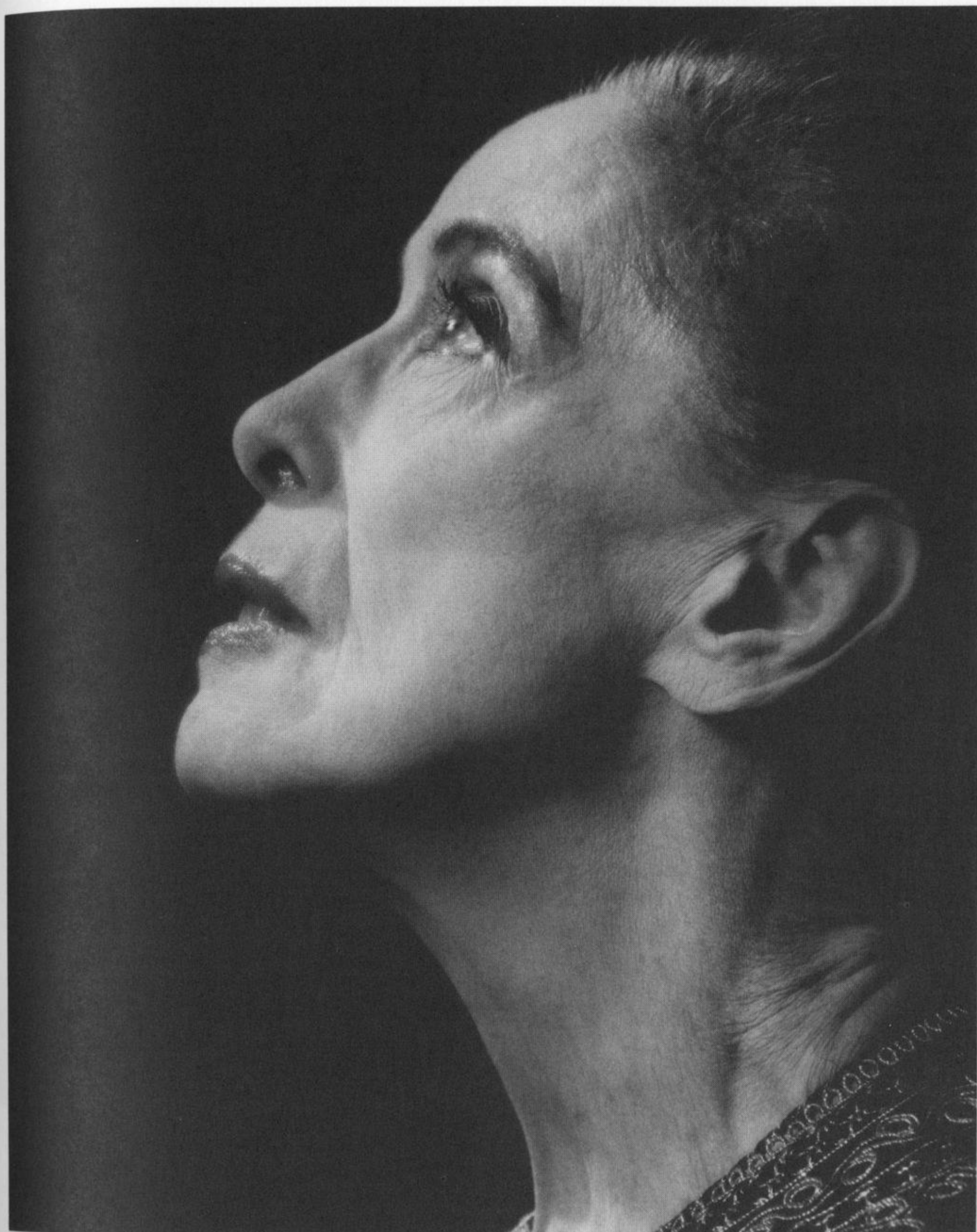
Merce Cunningham, dancer/choreographer. Photograph by Jack Mitchell, © 1975.



Louis Falco, dancer/choreographer. Costume by Robert Indiana. Photograph by Jack Mitchell, © 1970.



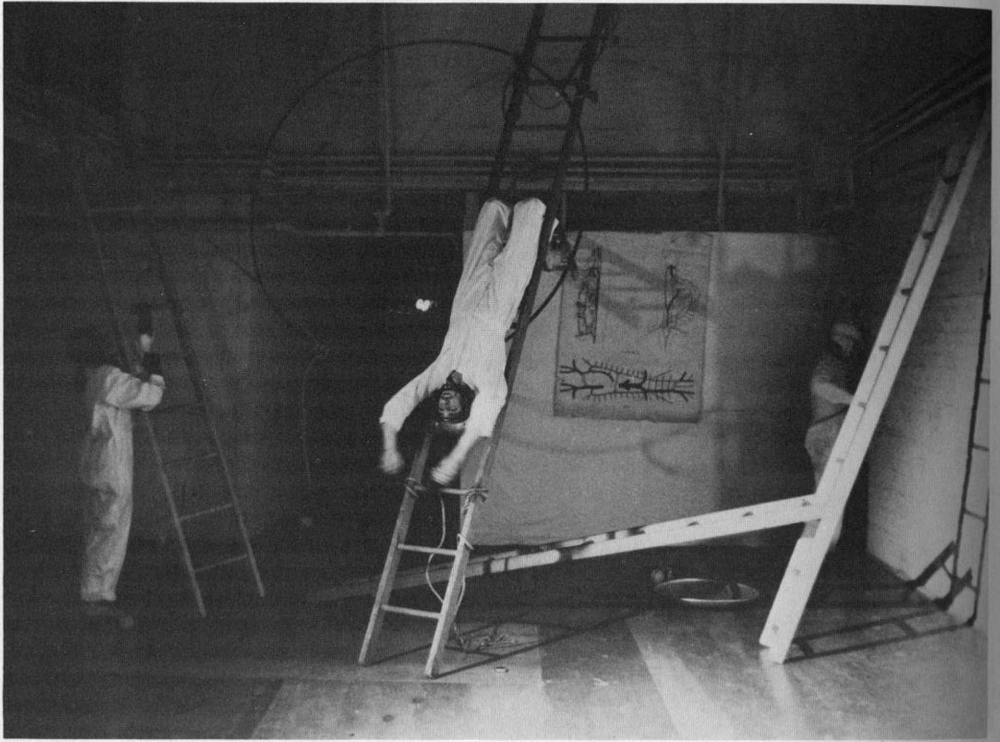
Judith Jamison, dancer. Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre. Photograph by Jack Mitchell, © 1975.



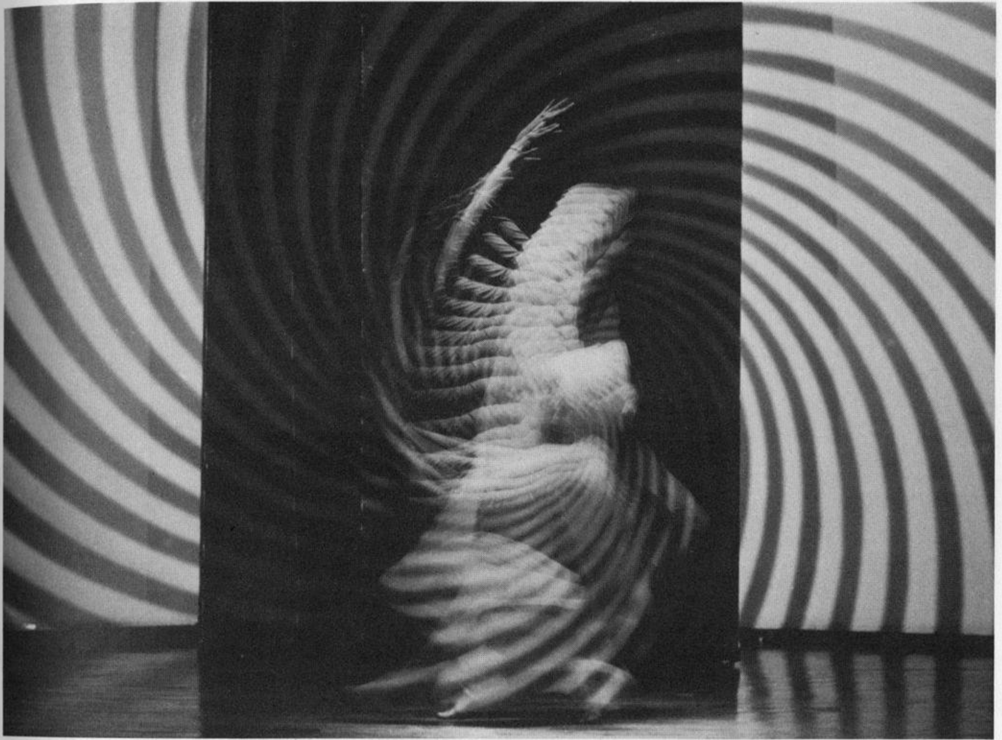
Martha Graham, dancer/choreographer. Photograph by Jack Mitchell, © 1973.

A Chorus Line, Michael Bennett, director. Photograph by Martha Swope.

Peter Martins and Suzanne Farrell of the New York City Ballet. Photograph by Martha Swope.

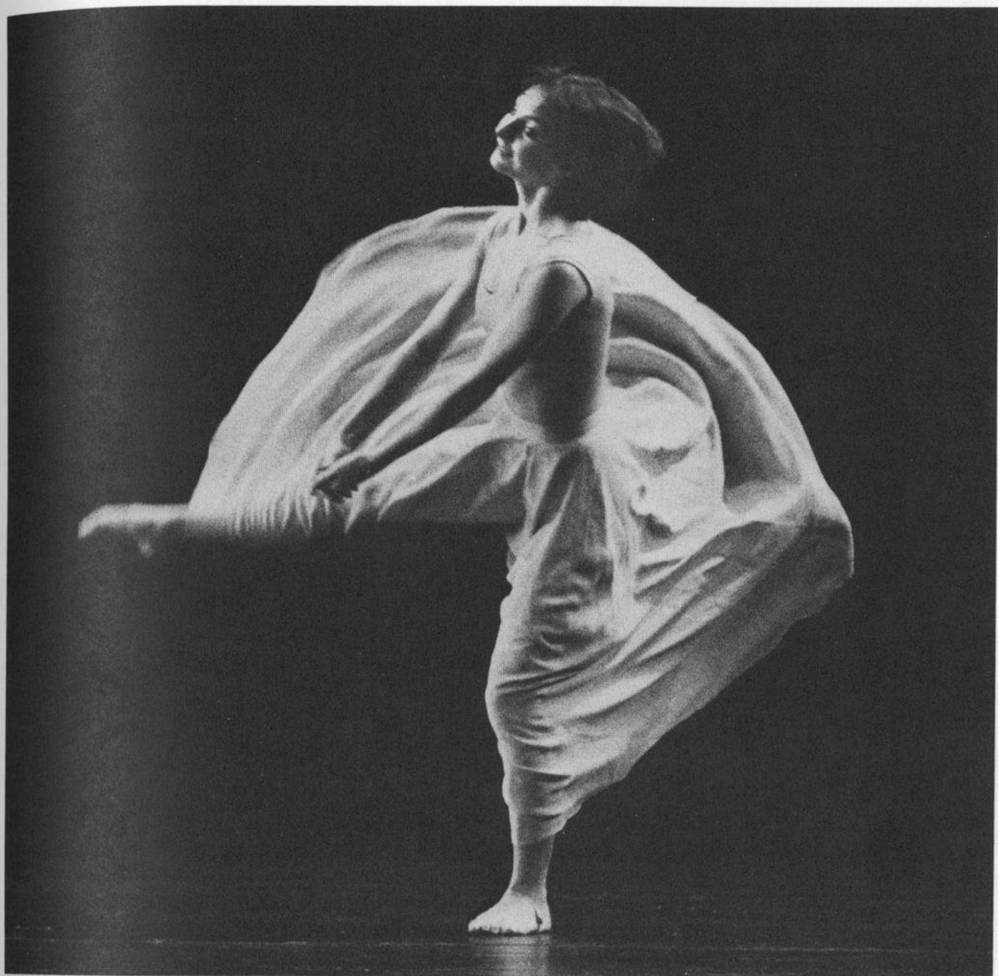


Elaine Summers' Company in a studio performance. Photograph by Peter Moore, 1966.

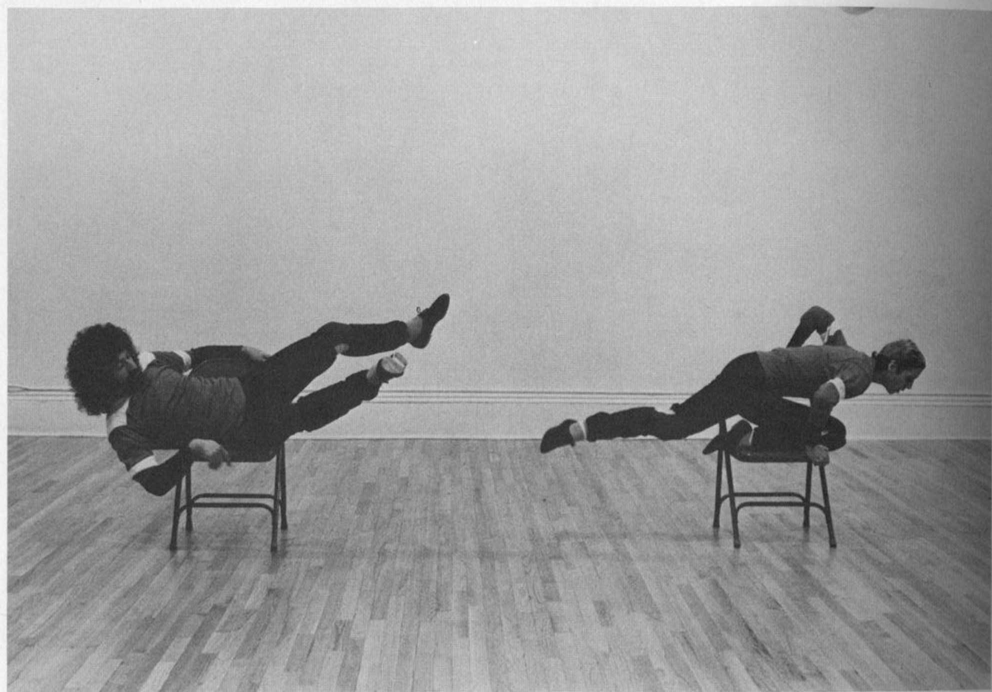


Flux, Mimi Garrard, dancer/choreographer. Photograph by Peter Moore, 1967.

Duo, Michael Uthoff, choreographer. Dancer: Lisa Bradley of The Hartford Ballet. Photograph by Lois Greenfield.

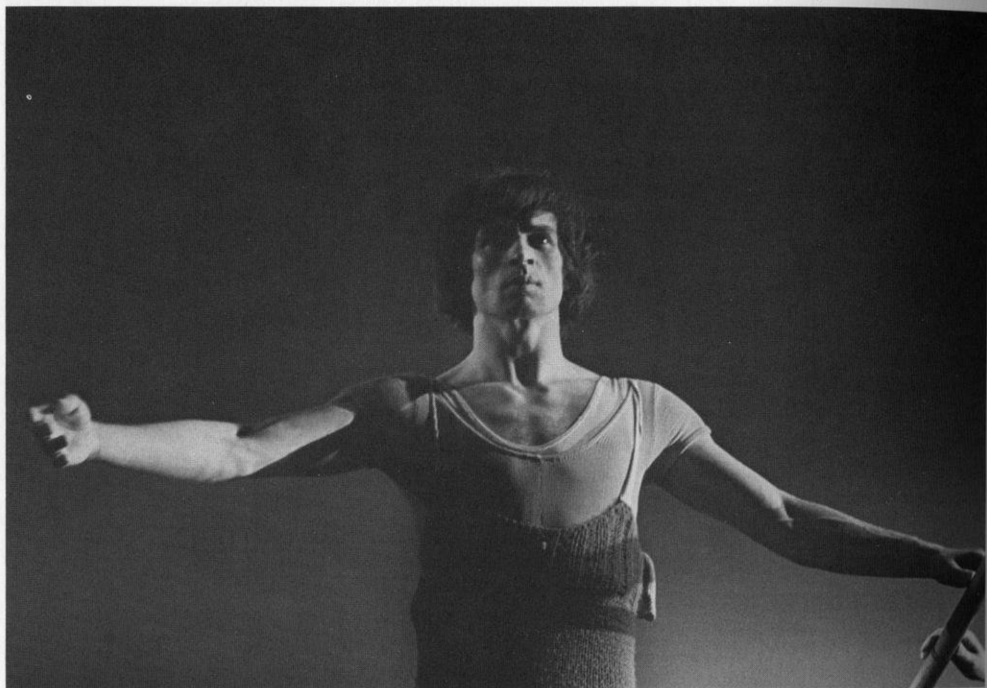


Four Against the Gods, Joyce Trisler, choreographer. Dancer: Anne-Marie Hackett as Doris Humphrey. Photograph by Lois Greenfield.

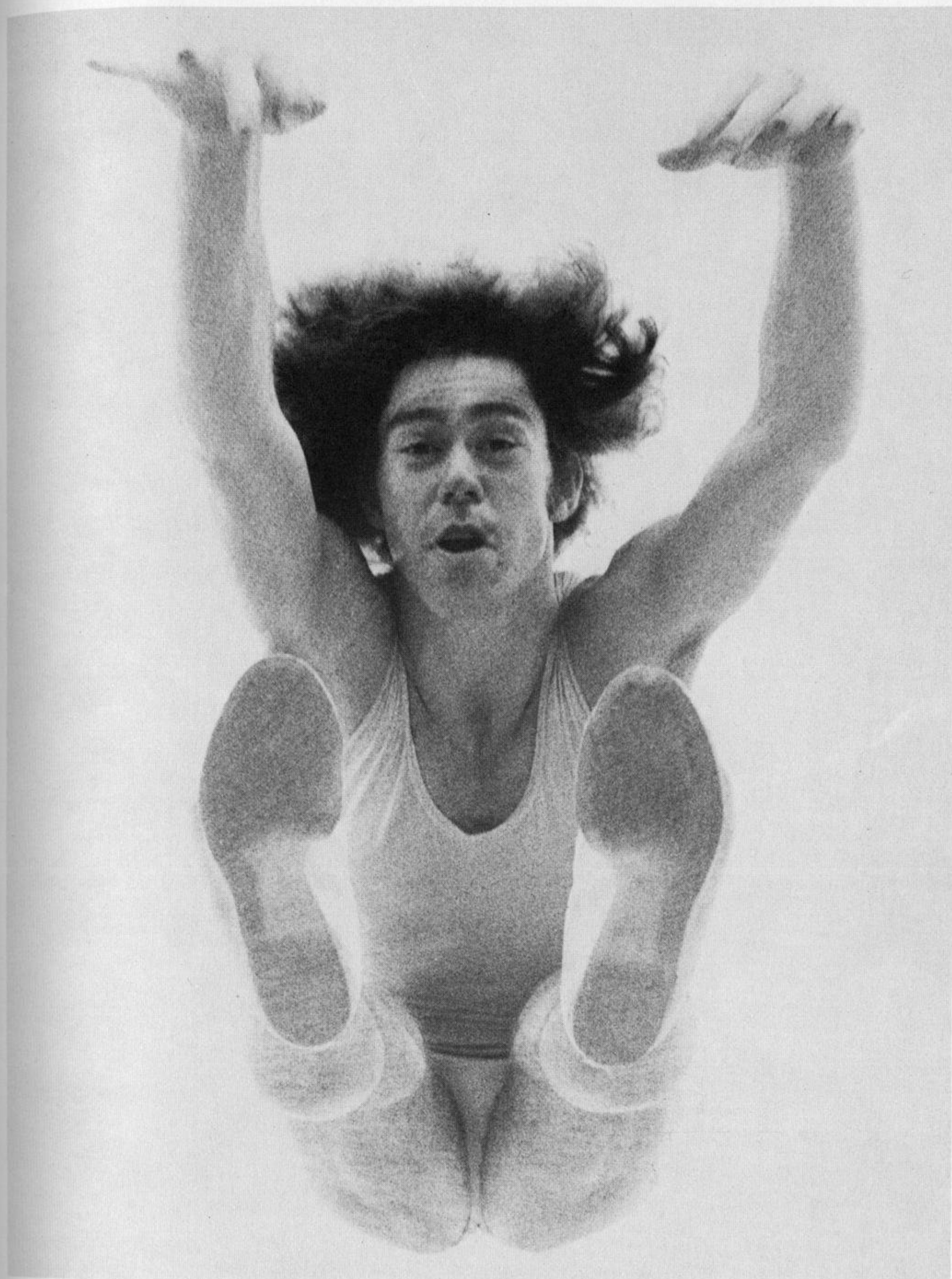


Chair, David Gordon, dancer/choreographer with Valda Setterfield. Photograph by Babette Mangolte, 1975.

Locus, Trisha Brown, dancer/choreographer with performers. Photograph by Babette Mangolte, 1975.



Rudolf Nureyev. Photograph by Zane Williams.



Ben Dolphin. Photograph by Zane Williams.

Regionalization
of Dance

by Doris Hering
Executive Director of the National Association for Regional Ballet; critic-at-large for Dance Magazine; *and Adjunct Associate Professor of Dance at New York University.*

Nancy Hanks, America's uniquely canny and sensitive champion of the arts, gave a keynote address about a year ago at the American Symphony Orchestra League Conference. In it she said, "I firmly believe that we have seen only the beginnings of a groundswell of support for cultural activities from the state and municipal levels." That was the necessarily practical viewpoint.

Another more spontaneous viewpoint was recently expressed by the celebrated actor-director-producer John Houseman, who said quite simply, "That's where the action is—in the regions."

Decentralization is by no means new to the arts in America. Since the early nineteenth century communities have had museums. Since the end of the nineteenth century resident symphony orchestras have flourished. Theatre and to a lesser degree opera have also developed a resident image. They also offer a range of experience that even New York's major repertory houses like the New York Shakespeare Festival, the New York City Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera can scarcely afford.

And how about dance? Why has it lagged so far behind the other arts in building a community identity—in becoming a part of every American city and town, instead of merely feeding into the voracious New York talent hopper? Dance quite simply had a late start in the United States. To a degree we can blame Puritanism. We can blame the "Bible Belts" which still encircle areas of the Southeast; huge portions of the Midwest and some sections of the Southwest and New England. The Pacific Coast is relatively free of these constraints and so the dance development, especially in Northern California and in the Pacific Northwest has been more encouraging. For example some of this generation's finest male talents have come from the Pacific Northwest. These have included Robert Joffrey, director of the Joffrey Ballet; Richard Englund, director of the Ballet Repertory Company; Robert Barnett, director of the Atlanta Ballet; Robert Lindgren, director of the North Carolina Dance Theatre; and choreographer-innovator Merce Cunningham.

The development of American dance was also inhibited by a scarcity of serious teachers and by the uncompromising fact, even today, that the director of a dance company must

"where the action is"

create much of his own repertoire. At best the repertoire of Western theatrical dance spans only a jot farther back than the nineteenth century. It is relegated to a handful of "classics" like **Giselle, La Sylphide, Swan Lake, The Nutcracker,** and **The Sleeping Beauty.** Of the eighteenth century we have only **La Fille Mal Gardée**—or at least a facsimile of it.

Think of the repertoire a symphony conductor has to draw upon. Not only is it vast, but there are works at various levels of difficulty to suit the inexperienced as well as the mature musician. Furthermore, the conductor doesn't have to create his own scores nor does he have to train his own musicians.

Most of the arts have professional organizations, but these have come into being long after the art itself was deeply entrenched. For example, the earliest symphony orchestras in this country date back a hundred years, and yet the American Symphony Orchestra League was founded in 1954. But because of their acute geographic and artistic isolation, America's decentralized dance companies organized at a far earlier stage in their development. Most ballet companies in the United States are between five and twenty-five years old. And yet so great was their need for identity that the National Association for Regional Ballet dates back to 1956. It was born in Atlanta, the home of the venerable (1929 being its founding date) Atlanta Ballet.

The eight Southeastern companies who participated in the first regional ballet festival convened to see what their peer groups were doing—and to be seen by audiences in a new community where hometown pride (or prejudice) would not be a factor. This took courage. It still does, and there have been sixty-seven festivals in five regions of the nation.

More than that, the directors realized that their dancers needed the example of others whose accomplishments would encourage them to study more seriously. It's interesting to note that the average regional dancer in those early days took as few as two classes per week. Today's average is five to twelve classes per week.

The basic motivation of the National Association for Regional Ballet has not changed over the years. It has intensified. The problem of company directors who are basically teachers and must be choreographers *faute de mieux* is being partially met by summer choreography conferences where they can concentrate on creative problems. The need for more varied repertoire is now beginning to be met by a carefully culled and monitored list of strong works drawn from the festivals and made available to member companies, with

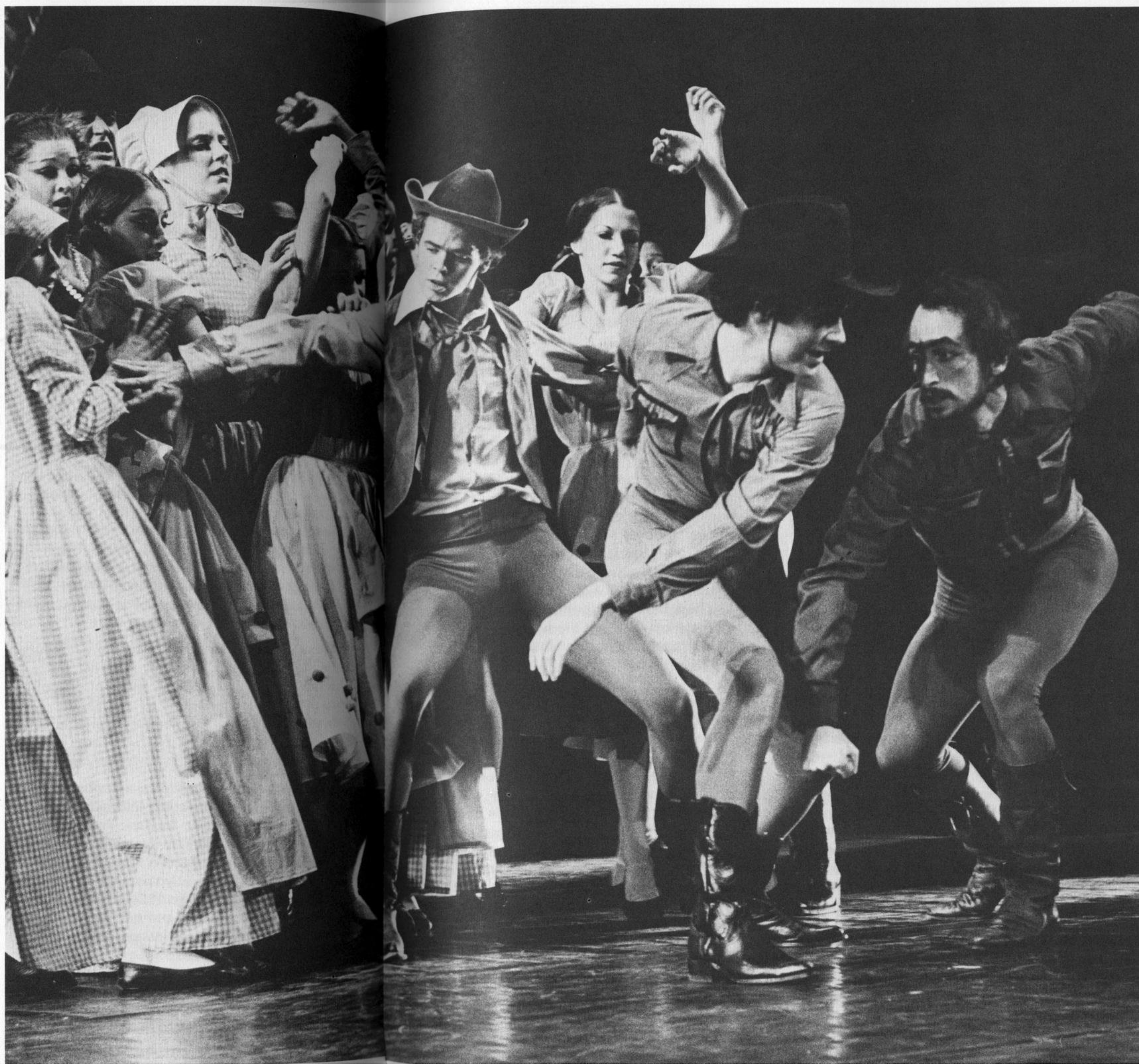
the costs currently underwritten by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Southern Federation of State Arts Agencies.

During the past eight years the economic pressure on New York based companies with little or no performing outlet has been resourcefully met by the National Endowment's Dance Touring Program (the Program includes companies from other areas, but the majority emanate from New York). The sound regional company and the sound touring company are mutually complementary. The touring group offers a welcome temporary source of stimulation. The resident company provides a ready made audience for the touring group, and it assures a performing continuity during the arid times between visits from out-of-towners.

Some communities, despite the growth of the Dance Touring Program, still depend entirely on their resident companies. It is a big responsibility. And it is being met with increasing skill as younger and younger couples leave the large professional touring companies and settle down to raise families. They are making dance a stable and meaningful part of community life.

To a great degree they depend upon their National Association for stimulation and perspective; they depend upon their state and local arts agencies for financial help. As more and more of them become economically viable (In 1974, seven NARB companies had reached budgets of $100,000 and over), they will take their rightful place beside the theatre groups, symphonies and opera companies in physical facilities designed for the comfort of all. All have much to learn from each other.

During the past decade the dance audience is reputed to have shifted from seventy percent in New York City to seventy percent outside of New York. Regionalism has had much to do with this. It's out there chipping away at prejudice and building its own structure—one of increasing strength and individuality. The next twenty years should be years of amazing fruition for those companies with the humility and insight to keep on growing. Their audiences will inevitably grow with them. □



Billy the Kid, Eugene Loring, choreographer. Dayton Civic Ballet.

by George Beiswanger
Dance critic Emeritus for the Atlanta Journal.

Regional dance as it is practiced today is not born of the soil nor bred in the bone. It is transplanted dance, sown and cultivated by those who have picked up dance elsewhere at least in part. Even those who started at home return bearing cultural goods to bestow upon the local community.

Regional dance comes in non-regional modes: ballet, modern, avant garde, ethnic, jazz, or some individual mix. The language is eclectic, open to inflection and variation, but hardly "native" even when incorporating ethnic strains or exuding a flavor of its own.

Norbert Vesak recently set **Gift to Be Simple** upon the Atlanta Ballet. It uses Shaker words and tunes, gestures and movements, motifs and themes. It "speaks" for a vivid fragment of the American heritage. But it is no more folk art than was Doris Humphrey's **The Shakers** of 1931 or, for that matter, Agnes de Mille's **Rodeo.**

Dance of the folk sort is out of the question except as an exercise in nostalgia because American culture no longer supports the institutions by which dance of the blood-and-soil type is nourished. It is not merely that the myths and occasions upon which such art depends no longer prevail. Grassroots dance (all dance starts as a local affair) has come to mean person-made rather than people-created art. Whatever its provenance and style, today's dance takes for granted the hard won right to be a personally pursued activity on a par with the other arts of the twentieth century, even those calling themselves non-art or anti-art.

The regional movement shares this ideology. Its leaders think of themselves as dancers, choreographers, artists, instigators of the creative. The principle of the dance-invigorated and dance-activating person informs their endeavors no matter how conventional or far out. They may profess a regional mystique but they are engaged in training dancers, producing and reproducing dance works, cultivating audiences, and scrambling for the financial wherewithal.

The crux of the matter is not existential but economic. Dance-making is tied into the enterprise system of art production, that by which individual initiative and corporate organization (the choreographer and the dance company) proceed to make dances for a local, a metropolitan, a regional, a national, a worldwide market. Not that processed and

notes on the notion of regional dance

merchandised dance is bad. Twentieth-century dance is as splendid as any that humankind has brought forth.

But the agony of dance-making, the psychic wear and tear, is to be understood only in the light of the economic actualities: competitive enterprise; deficit financing; the appeal to private charity and public subvention; the welfare way of life to which the dance profession is assigned, from the lowliest performer to the producers at the top. In short, the pressures of a wage-and-price system under which the risk of art-making is so high that there is no surcease from insecurity in station and livelihood. Hence the artist alienation and audience estrangement of which sociologists make so much.

Some think of regionalism as the way out, the road to decentralized dance, the return of dance-making to the local community. Release creativity in every corner of the land! Let native genius blossom and bear fruit! May no talent be lured to Babylon, there to be exploited and trashed!

It is true that diffusing dance production throughout the length and breadth of the nation goes hand in hand with evoking the springs of dance everywhere. Regionalism which spreads and binds at one and the same time—*E pluribus unum*—has been the American way. But the institutions which regionalism fosters—dance companies and associations, college and university departments of dance, state and regional arts councils, urban and rural centers of dance activity—carry along with them the procedures and habits of the enterprise system of art production.

It is within the effects of this ever-so-American way of doing dance business as it impinges upon dance energies themselves whether local or diffused that one must look for the problems and potentials, the patterns and prototypes, and the ultimate promise of dance regionalism. To be specific—

Regional dance largely entrusts the initial unearthing and shaping of dance's primary material, the movement-gifted child, to the privately owned and operated dance school or academy. Each school is as good as its teaching integrity and dance-making morale. But dance schools are in business, and the business is competitive, often cut-throat, financially marginal, and at the mercy of a parental clientele whose interest waxes and wanes as their offspring (mostly daughters) move into and out of the training sieve.

Top schools sponsor dance companies and present public programs. The resident

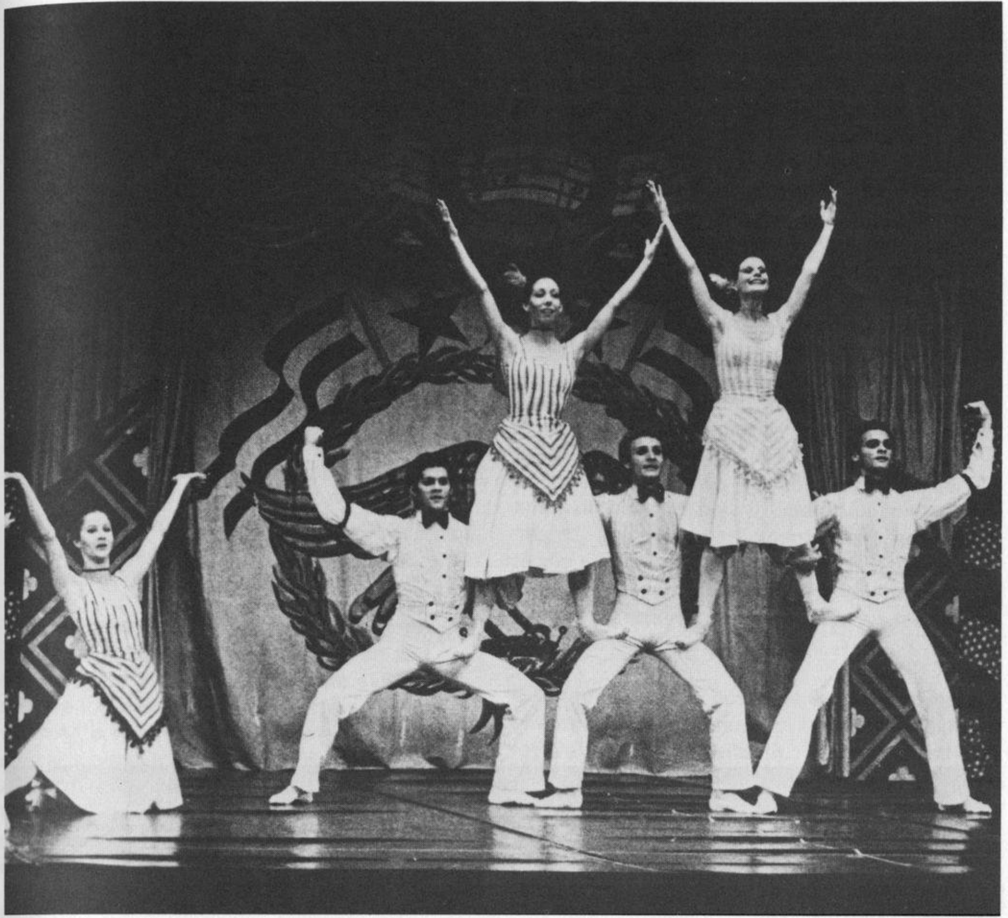
Gift To Be Simple, Norbert Vesak, choreographer. The Atlanta Ballet.

choreographers depend for their livelihood, however, not upon the works they create but the pupils they train. They are tied to the realization that the dance capacities they mine and process will peter out for the most part or move away before their promise is realized. The situation makes for a choreographic plateau above which it is well nigh impossible to rise.

Music in the public schools helps to free the professionals of a sister art from a similar bind. It may not be long before schools of the performing arts, just coming into Atlanta and the Southeast, do the same for dance. Other ways of initiating the young into dance may emerge from artist-in-the-schools programs and arts extension activity within the inner city. The academy system itself with its apprentice-labor concept and elitist creed may be on the way out. But will that leave its extraordinary dance-making capacity high and dry? Is regionalism's choice between the overdeveloped and the understretched?

There is scarcely a regional ballet company which has not modeled itself or at least its aspirations upon Big City ballet. Modern and avant garde ambition have been equally grandiose: the choreographer-created dance unit or group. But neither prototype has succeeded in taking firm root except in the Northeast. Instead a third type of performing association has begun to emerge and to prove itself rich with regional promise.

The experience of the Atlanta Ballet is typical. During the sixties it strove to make itself into a full-size professional company presenting the standard repertory including full-length



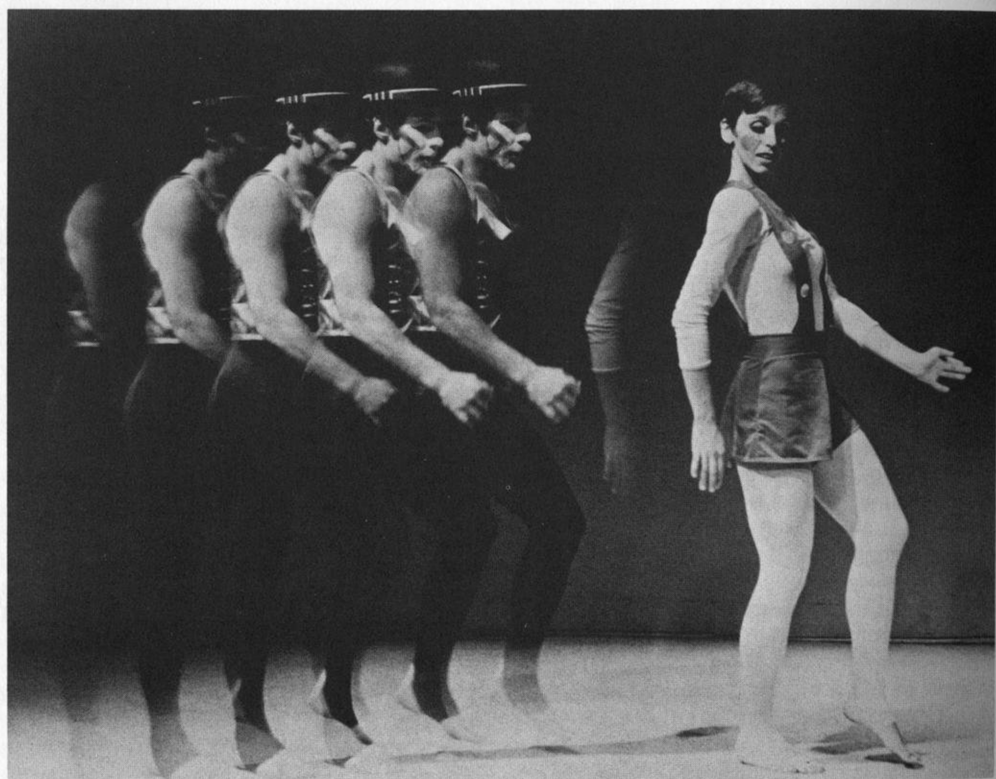
Great Scott, Tom Pazik, choreographer.
The Atlanta Ballet.

ballets along with contemporary works and new ballets created on the lot. It also sponsored a dance theatre project centered around its modern dance teacher and choreographer.

Other ballet companies and dance groups in the metropolitan area looked in the same direction. There were flurries of weekend performances and hopeful premieres. But things remained on the recital and recreational level while the grandscale thrust of the Atlanta Ballet foundered and fell apart. The talent was there but the resources to support it could not be mustered.

In these straits it would have been natural to fall back upon **The Nutcracker** at Christmas time and repertory weekends in the fall and spring. These the Atlanta Ballet continued to produce. But it also proceeded to put together, with modest state and national support, a new kind of company, a small, tightly-knit touring ensemble of young professionals increasingly versed in a variety of choreographic modes.

This meant foregoing two established ideals: the ballet company of symphony size and the dance group devoted to a single expressional impulse. But it sparked the elan of a versatile unit whose members joyfully swam in a melting pot of dance styles and whose size allowed it to take to the road. The new company kept faith with tradition by retaining the classic *pas de deux* but cut its teeth upon a score of contemporary works created by dance-makers of assorted ilk, themselves at ease in a free-wheeling language of movement that drew upon every twentieth-century influence since Isadora Duncan and Michel Fokine flung open the doors.



Lean and doughty touring ensembles actually began to crop up in the 1930's and 1940's when the Graham and Humphrey-Weidman groups and Kirstein's Ballet Caravan traveled to the hinterland and foreign countries stripped down to the minimum on tour. They brandished stylistic banners, however, while the contemporary model raises only the flag of dance.

The regional virtues of the latter approach are many. Besides introducing wide ranges of dance in a form that is easy to take, the ensemble is small yet distinctive enough to participate effectively in residency programs designed to enrich local dance. The group settles into a college, university or common school, an inner city dance center or a rural neighborhood for as much as a week to present its own work but also to put new spark into the dance endeavors of the host community.

The give-and-take is mutual, and word gets around. Engagements open up within and beyond state lines. Often they are sufficient to keep the dancers on contract throughout the year, a goal that is out of sight in the dancer's own locale. Making a livelihood in dance becomes regionally possible. The life is that of touring, therefore second best, but so was life in the good old days when drama troupes and vaudeville acts roamed the land.

Regional dance, then, like other performing arts, comes up with an economic paradox. Only out of town are dancers able to fill the outlines of a livelihood, a sparse one at that. The sense of irony deepens as one keeps in mind that the support which the local citizenry fail to provide at home they supply as taxpayers to the dancer on tour. Where would the touring ensemble be without state arts funds and the National Endowment for the Arts? How far could the regional dance movement have come?

The paradox has an explanation. As a craft, dance requires the steady worker, the laborer worthy of his hire. But as fun and games, dance does not rate compensation on the wage-and-price scale. Dancers and dance-makers must therefore take to the road, that is to say, must go begging.

Sunday Comix, Joe Kelly, choreographer.
Dancers: Joe Kelly and Patricia McFetrich.
Atlanta Contemporary Dance Co.

Locally the handouts come in chunks tied to special occasions as in primitive times, but the occasions are personal rather than festal, private and irregular rather than public and set to a communal clock. Hence the diffidence with respect to the dancers' compensation. It is easier to give less-than-enough to strangers. The touring dancer, like the phantoms on TV and the cinema screen, shows up, astonishes, and is gone. The remuneration does not appear as wages, to affront the pocket-book sense, and if spectators are scandalized, it is not by someone next door.

Avant garde dance and the extension arts movement are instinctively right in their desire to transform art occasions into common occurrences wherein everyone participates and skill intrudes only to add an uncommon "high." But even participant dance turns professional today (Ann Halprin holds school and puts on a show). Dancers and dance-makers work up a repertory, and repertories require more than occasional support.

Granted the presuppositions of contemporary culture, the development of repertory out of festival dance is inevitable. The movement-possessed are bound to create it anyhow and the movement-enraptured to demand it as well. Repertory dance is all-year dance in its making and its taking in, and there is no escaping the economics of that fact. Crafted, it requires to be processed and distributed. It must traverse the marketplace in order to get from heart to heart.

So we have today's touring choreography: dances that are post-Balanchine, post-Tudor, post-Graham, post-Robbins and de Mille, even post-Ailey; dances that travel well but not luxuriously; dances which are dramatically allusive yet basically abstract; dances in an idiom which Dorothy Alexander, founder of the Atlanta Ballet and grand dame of the regional ballet movement, calls America's new classicism but which in any case are suited to the road.

Bearing them go sets of troupers who are up to anything, ready with outstretched arms, and able to palaver at any post (even Alaska). Atlanta now has two: the Atlanta Ballet ensemble and the Atlanta Contemporary Dance Company. There are scores throughout the land. The regional network they are activating is a good sign in this bicentennial year. □

by Suzanne Shelton
Texas Correspondent, Dance Magazine;
Dance critic, Texas Monthly.

Dance in the Southwest is in transition. The Ballets Russe-influenced classical ballet, which has dominated the region, is moving over to make room for experimentation. This new openness toward dance as a community expression has produced changes in performing styles and conditions. The search for new performing spaces has led Southwestern companies to museums, outdoor pavilions, band shells, alley ways, roof tops and shopping malls. In Texas, Austin Ballet Theatre performs once each month in a rock music barn before an average audience of 1000 patrons who sip beer and watch a changing repertoire of ballets. As dance becomes a popular spectator sport, smaller companies mushroom.

Performing companies in the Southwest fill three broad categories. The major professional company of the region is Houston Ballet. Smaller professional troupes, which do not pay dancers a union-scale wage, include such companies as Dallas Ballet, Festival Ballet of San Antonio and Dance Theatre of the Southwest, a modern dance company. Civic companies affiliated with National Association for Regional Ballet are found in most Southwestern cities and form the heart of grass-roots dance in the region. Ethnic dance thrives in folk companies from the German and Czech communities of Texas. Wichita Falls Ballet Theatre performs authentic Eastern European dances, and Houston Jazz Ballet bases its repertoire on black dance. Chicano groups in Texas border cities explore the Mexican-American heritage, and American Indian dance troupes in Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma keep this tradition alive.

dance in the southwest

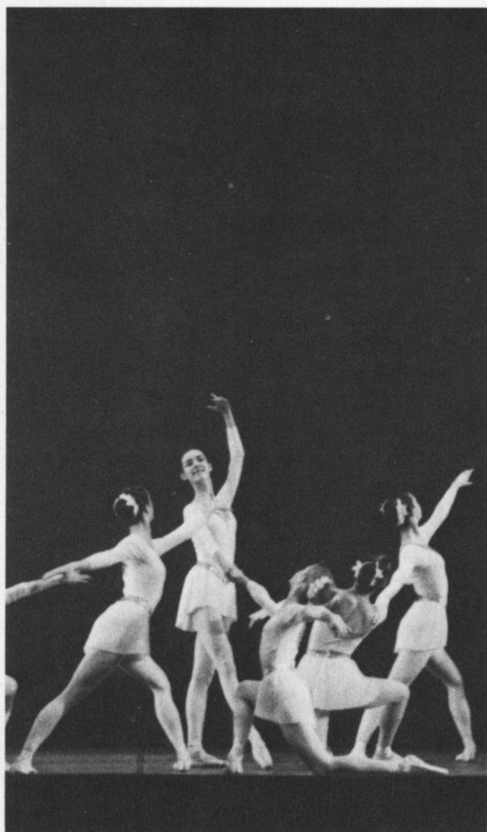
The chief problems of regional ballet are lack of exposure to the vital center of American dance, which has traditionally been New York. Even though decentralization is occurring, not enough good contemporary dance reaches the Southwest via films and TV and performing companies to keep its dance vital and responsive to contemporary life.

The promise of regional development in dance in America is overwhelming. If, especially, cassette films of dance become readily available, the entire art form is going to change, and geographic location will be less important. Even without a technological revolution, regional dance is healthy and financially sound. As New York dance suffers the same problems as New York itself, more and more dancers and choreographers turn to healthier areas. The Southwest is chock full of such immigrants.

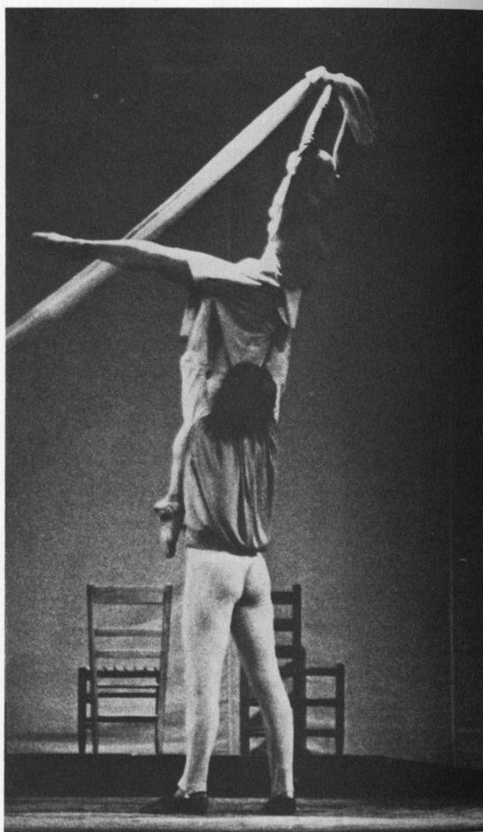
Local companies seem to flock to performances by touring companies and to learn from them. They share studio space and sometimes supper for the touring groups. The relationship seems healthy, and dance seems to feed dance.

No institutional prototypes seem unique to this region. □

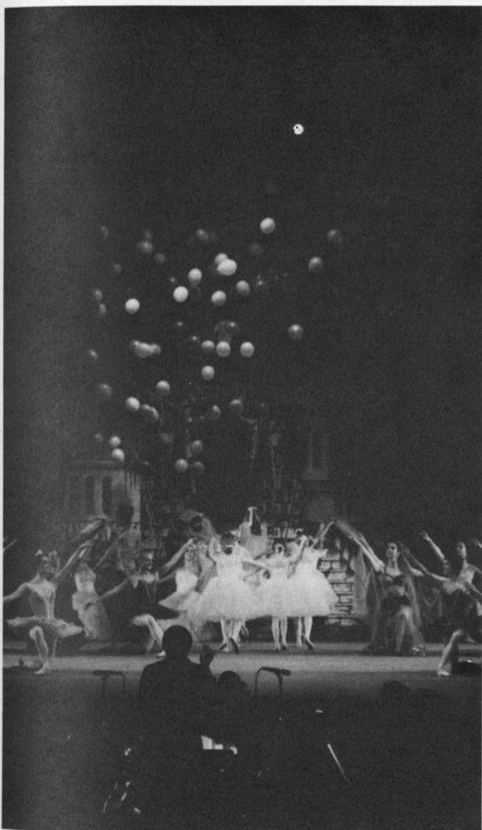
Classical Symphony. Tulsa Civic Ballet. Photo by R. J. Kumery.



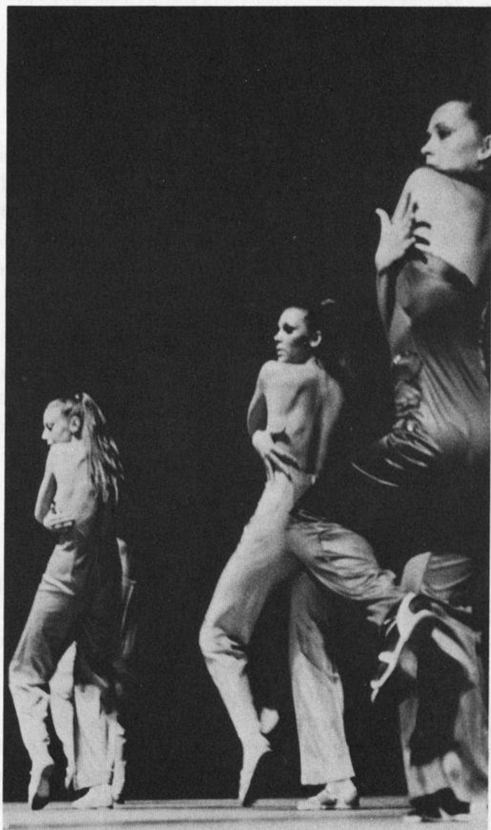
Tregmell. Austin Ballet Theatre. Photo by Bill Moore.



Nutcracker, Denver Civic Ballet.



Senior Company of the New Mexico Ballet Company.



by Glenn Giffin
Dance critic for the Denver Post.

The thing about Colorado and the whole Rocky Mountain region when it comes to dance is that there is a history of dance here and a more active continuity than one might suspect. Lola Montez and the American West can be documented (if memory serves, she visited Leadville, Colorado—but maybe not).

But I suppose it all depends on what one means by the terribly general term "dance." Ballet? Modern? Ethnic? Ballroom? Social? Free form? Improvised? Your questionnaire seems to indicate theatrical dance, the kind one pays admission to see.

Even on that basis there's a lot. The influences just in Colorado are many and varied. Doris Humphrey often taught summers in Greeley and in Steamboat Springs. Her mark continues in that dance is still part of the activity of both communities. (One of the very last choreographic activities of Jose Limon, her great pupil, was for the Santa Fe Opera and its production of Villa-Lobos' opera **Yerma**.) Hanya Holm has been teaching summers at Colorado College in Colorado Springs for the past twenty odd years. Her approach is a tangible link to the late Mary Wigman.

More importantly to be considered are the growing resident companies. Cleo Parker Robinson has been very active in the past several years creating a black dance troupe. Its emphasis goes to such figures as Alvin Ailey, Eleo Pomare, et al. Mrs. Robinson actively encourages this outlook through master classes with, most recently, Pomare, but also with Jason Taylor and the late Manzell Senters. Others are scheduled.

Another resident Denver company is the Gloria Winbur Dancers, more in the Murray Louis bag.

Ballet continues to be a popular spectacle, when the big companies come through, but this technique has a very hard struggle trying to become professional in Colorado. There is at present no company that is not studio based. None of them can support a professional dancer, but they do try. The Colorado Concert Ballet does **Giselle** and creditably—but Ballet Theatre does it better. The Denver Civic Ballet stays in existence solely by doing **The Nutcracker** every Christmas.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Divide, Salt Lake City has two very good companies: Repertory Dance Theatre and Ballet West, both of which tour Colorado. Why a self-supporting company cannot get started in Denver continues to amaze.

dance in the rocky mountain region

I think it is ethnic dance that has the greatest potential in this area as a form to find support. The Koshare Indian Dancers, for example. These aren't Indians at all, but a boy scout explorer post in La Junta. But their thing is dancing. Dancing professionally. They make money for a lot of projects doing it, though the boys themselves are not paid anything other than meals and lodging on the road. But they are good and have a formidable repertory in regular performances. This troupe has been going for nearly thirty years!

Corky Gonzales, Denver's firebrand Chicano leader, founded the Crusade for Justice a number of years ago. One adjunct of it is a Chicano school (classs all in Spanish, please—por favor) and dancing. It has genrated an actual troupe, a propaganda arm of CFJ, of course, but sends youngsters to Ballet Folklorico in Mexico to make sure the dancing is pure.

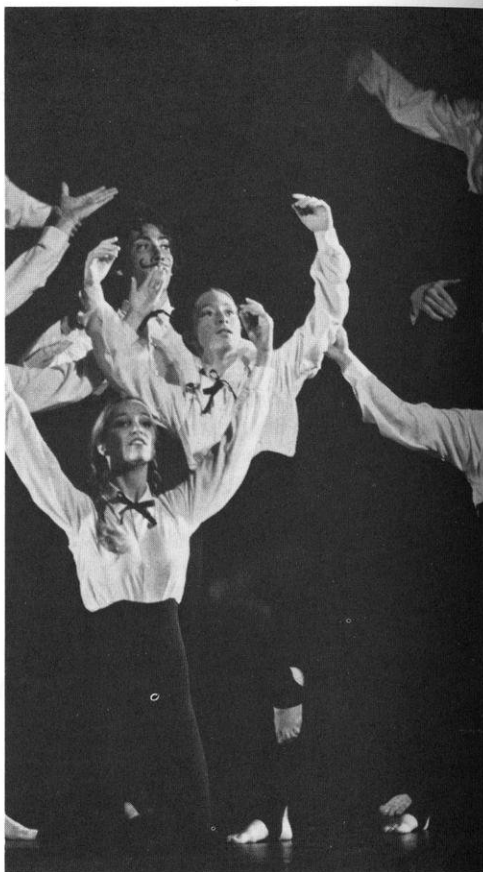
And it has a rival. Mrs. Lu Linon imports Ballet Folklorico dancers as teachers for her Fista Alegre company. It hasn't quite the funding of CFJ but manages to do nearly as much without the ensuing polemics. Cinco de Mayo means dancing—lots of it.

Not that this is limited just to Denver. Pueblo's Sangre de Christo Arts Center recently hired Lorenzo Trujillo to organize a company based at the center. It will offer Spanish and Mexican dance.

So where does dance in Colorado go from here? I haven't the foggiest notion, but avidly await each new development. □

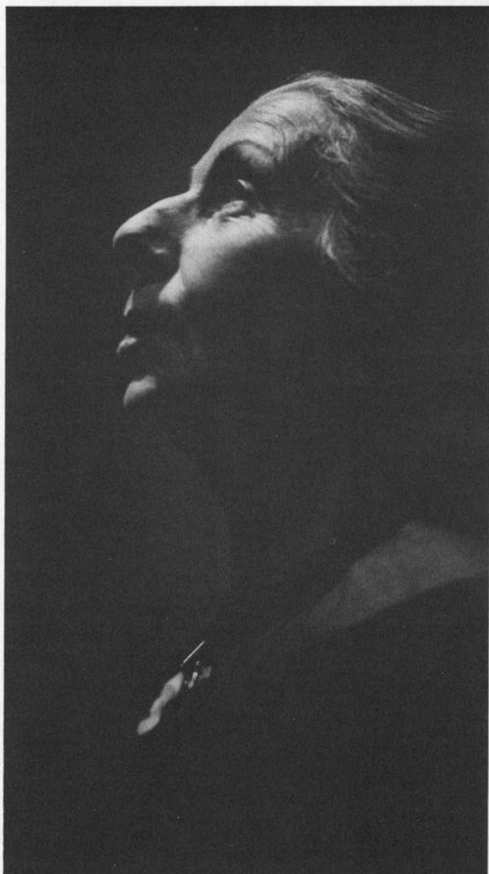
Timepiece, Gloria Winber and Company.

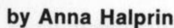
Salt Lake City Rag, Arizona State University Dance Theatre. Photo by Charles Conley.



Don Juan, Ballet West. Photo by Vinnie Fish.

Hanya Holm. Colorado College Summer Program.





by Anna Halprin
Founder of San Francisco Dancers' Workshop, where she has developed her approach to the movement art, for which she was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1971. She has authored Movement Ritual *and co-authored* When a School Comes Home, Exit to Enter, *and* Second Collected Writings.

Someone once asked me what was my favorite dance piece that I had created in the past twenty years. I answered "What I'm doing now." I always feel that way about any piece that I'm working on at the moment. At the moment I'm enthusiastically engaged in a year long series called "A Workshop for the People of San Francisco." A lot of energy, provocation and excitement has been generated so far and we are mid-way through the series. The purpose of this article is to share this experience wih you.

Background

During the great burst of discussions initiated by the notion of the Bicentennial, Henry Hopkins, director of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, called me on the phone to invite me for lunch to talk over ideas in relationship to my participation in Bicentennial activities to take place at the Museum. Henry suggested a revisit of **Parades and Changes** to be performed by the Dancers' Workshop Company. I agreed that **Parades and Changes** was an excellent selection since that piece symbolized a culmination of vital, productive collaboration of San Francisco artists and a fruition of the avant-garde art of the 1960's. The period of the sixties was incredibly creative and produced a stream of innovative theatre ideas. At the Dancers' Workshop, a cross-fertilization took place between artists like Terry Riley, La Monte Young, Morton Subotnik, Luciano Berio, Pauline Oliveros (musicians), and James Broughton, Richard Brautigan, Gary Snyder (poets and filmmakers), Charles Ross, Bob Morris (sculptors), the late Kenneth Dewey, and dancers like Simone Forte, Trish Brown, Yvonne Rainer, Meredith Monk, and the on-going company of A. A. Leath, John Graham, Daria Halprin, and Norma Leistiko. Also environmentalists Patric Hickey, Lawrence Halprin and Jo Landor. (Forgive me if I've omitted anyone, which surely I have, since so many important artists were contributing towards this collaborative process). To go back to this period now and attempt to reproduct this work of the sixties is not like pulling out a painting from the storage room. I would have to reproduce the "flower children" of that period to be the dance-performers and the collaborators of the artists. Like me, they too have spiraled up to newer concerns. The energy of the sixties has already been recycled into a new form of expression in the seventies.

a gift to the people of san francisco from the san francisco dancers' workshop

City Spirit and a Workshop/Performance

With this background a new idea emerged in our discussion. Dance has a unique capacity to reflect societal modes as well as to influence and focus on the undercurrents and surface them. Also, to bring about change. At the Dancers' Workshop we have been developing and pioneering in a theatre form called Workshop/Performances, an outgrowth of our Dance Workshop process. To give a city-wide workshop to the people of San Francisco seemed like the perfect direction to pursue. It would help us at the Dancer's Workshop to continue to experiment and expand on our current growth and development and at the same time fulfill the philosophy of City Spirit, a Bicentennial initiative for exploring future trends in arts in America. Several points of view which are shared by both City Spirit and Dancers' Workshop workshops are:

1. People wish to enjoy the making of art themselves, and they wish to become involved themselves in the process of art.
2. The professional artist works with community groups and the individuals to help them create rather than perform for them. The artist takes on the role of a catalyst.
3. Life and Art are closely linked. Art is an evocation of life with each person and community making its own art out of its own lifestyle, culture and unique background. For that reason ethnic backgrounds and input has an important role in forming the community as a fundamental force.
4. Institutions (such as the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art) should enlarge their function to include community art and artists by becoming a center for their activities.
5. The concept should utilize and include the environment as places for art to occur.

These five points are excerpted from the guidelines put out by City Spirit as developed by Lawrence Halprin and a committee sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts. The idea of a year long series of workshops which would be offered free of charge for the people of San Francisco in the Rotunda Gallery at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art began to form. A press release went out. Essentially, this is what the press release said:

Information:

A ritual is a way for a community to pay particular attention to an important issue. This "Male/Female Ritual" will confront the issue of how women and men come to respect and appreciate their differences and use their differences to create new

commonalities. The ritual will explore ways women and men can give up the old sexual imprints, the old dances, that haven't been working in order to create new and better dances.

For the past two years the San Francisco Dancers' Workshop has worked to develop a new social perspective and a new way of working that involves a fuller and more diverse participation amongst people. The purpose of "A Workshop for San Francisco" is based on the point of view that everyone has the capacity to experience their life as a dance and the city as a theatre.

Every event that takes place in San Francisco can be looked at as a dance. From this perspective everyone is a dancer. Waking up each morning begins a new dance and going to sleep at night brings that dance to completion.

The Dancers' Workshop has now created a new kind of dance theatre called a workshop/performance through which anyone can deepen their appreciation of their own life dance and of the dance of their whole social community.

Background:

"A Workshop for San Francisco" meets on Thursdays once a month throughout 1976.

People who attend are able to choose to participate in the dances or witness the performance that happens. Each session is a whole event in its own right and also each event builds on the previous ones.

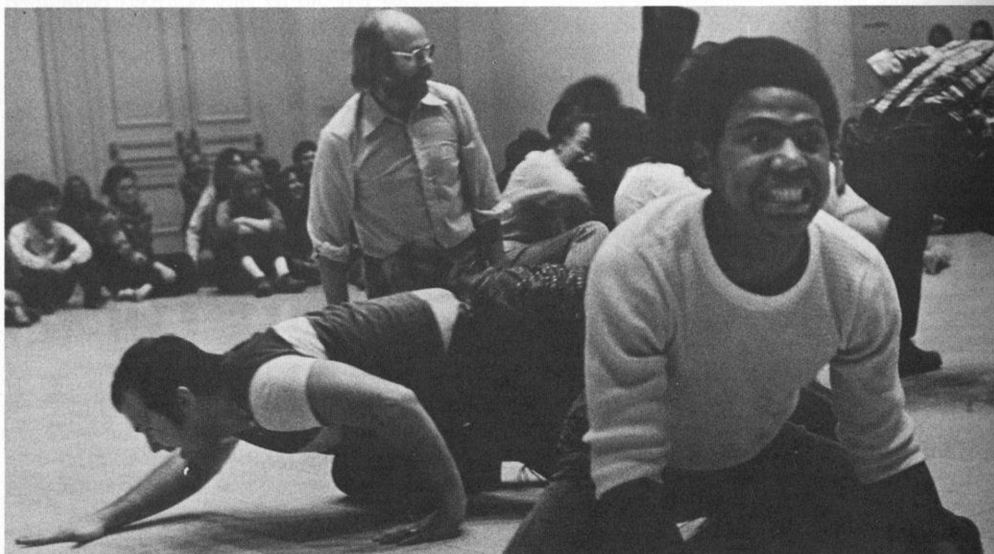
At least two hundred and fifty people have attended each of the first three dance events in the series. The people include children and adults of all ages and backgrounds.

The first event, "Movement Rituals," was designed to help participants to become more aware of the ways they move. They experienced rhythm as a common denominator in exploring their own natural dance of walking.

In the second and third events, "Collective Creativity" and "How to Create a Dance and Dance It," the Dancers' Workshop presented its approach to the creative process, which enables people to mutually create their own dances using the universal language of movement in relation to their own unique cultural and individual histories.

The San Francisco Dancers' Workshop has helped lead the way in producing many of the innovations that have guided the evolu-

San Francisco Dancers' Workshop. Photo by Rudi Bender.



tion of contemporary dance and theatre. Throughout its twenty-two year history, the Dancers' Workshop has collaborated with San Francisco musicians, sculptors, painters, poets, filmmakers, and architects. The Workshop was the first dance group to come down off the stage and involve the audience in an experience of total theatre; the first dance group to introduce nudity on stage; and one of the first multi-racial companies to make cross-cultural interaction a performance focus. The Workshop is also known for its innovative use of outdoor settings for dance events.

Subsequent events in the "Workshop for San Francisco" series will include a "Trance Dance," and outdoor environmental event and a dance which will take place throughout the city of San Francisco.

The first workshop attracted 150 people. The second and third attracted more and more until the fourth workshop had 500 participants! At the beginning we received no publicity from the newspapers. When Soto, our dancer-publicity person, asked why none of his releases got into the newspapers, his frustration was answered when one newspaper person said, "I don't know what you are *doing*." Mary Ryan, who handles publicity at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (co-sponsors of the "Male/Female Ritual"), said the critics wouldn't come because they were afraid they would be pressured into having to perform.

So the Dancers' Workshop called a press conference together in the hope that we could speak out to the media about our belief that indeed through participation dance can be a powerful and expressive force in enriching everyone's life. Twelve dance critics were invited and only one, Eleanor Luger of **Dance Magazine,** came. Even so, we have a problem: What to do with the overflow of people who are beginning to respond and to come. This has gone beyond the dependency on traditional dance critics or newspaper releases. Through excitement and sharing and lots of word-of-mouth communication, we have hit the grassroots. It is thrilling to look out amongst the participants and see children and adults creating and dancing together, to witness the diversity of all the ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds coming together and mutually creating new and meaningful rituals and ceremonies about the very fabric of their own personal and social lives.

What this signifies to me is that there is in the seventies a burgeoning trend in which I see a strong desire amongst a responsible segment in our society to participate more and **Take Part** in their lives. A desire to be actively

San Francisco Dancers' Workshop. Photo by Rudi Bender.

engaged, involved, and creative. And that dance can become a natural and delightful form of expression. When I see 500 souls touching one another in dance, I am reminded of Isadora Duncan's remark: "I see America dancing."

At the closure of every session with the participants, we ask for responses and feedback which we then incorporate into the following event. Some of the feedback we have gotten:

From the Men:
"I want more music, more time to move, more inspiration for explorations." "I learned that I love to dance. It is a pleasure to express myself in dance with others." "About the directing. I didn't believe in what they were telling me to do." "I liked dancing with another man. It was beautiful." "I loved the candlelight procession by the Dancers' Workshop performers at the beginning." "Magic." "I liked seeing men come out and express so much more than I would have thought." "I liked listening to the women singing and chanting together." "I'm inhibited and suspicious about male encounter in San Francisco." "I liked watching the children dance, and dancing with them." "I liked seeing the oneness of them as they rose towards the clearer light and feeling the love of the men without fear of masculinity." "I learned that I could reach out and dance my fears, sorrows and joys."

From the Women:
"Chanting with other women was beautiful, and so was hearing the women shrieking." "My body is sorer than I thought." "I don't like collective activities." "I like the whole thing and I learned that I love being a woman." "I liked my sweat and the taste of the sea in my mouth." "I liked being able to step out and stand back whenever I wanted to. I liked being myself. I loved the entrance with the beautiful dancers from the workshop lighting our way in with candlelight. I felt rushes of expectations and excitement. I learned that I need the support of a community of women in order to be free in myself." "A strong experience for me was the men's support. My own self-love as a woman and my love for the men." "I was left paralyzed four years ago. It was a joyous time for me to see that I could dance." "The music is great and the whole presentation is very professional and exciting." "I liked dancing together with so many people (women)." "I liked watching the young and old women dance together." "There were too many people." "Well, I nearly started crying when some men hugged each other." "The whole evening was absolutely incredible. Dancing as a woman with other women was wonderful. I love us. The men were so wild and had so much high

San Francisco Dancers' Workshop. Photo by Rudi Bender.

energy, I felt scared. I learned that I'm more accepting of female energy than male."

The next in our series will have to do with men and women coming together, and we will incorporate the feedback from this event into the next one. For example, we discovered from the responses that people wanted less instruction and that, although they liked seeing the Dancers' Workshop Performing Group demonstrate, they wanted to be sure that their own time to dance would not be limited. Our format has shifted to get our performers to be more involved with the participation of the audience. As the series continues, I anticipate learning and changing along with everyone else.

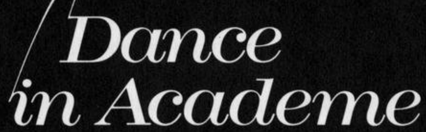
The format underlying our workshop series, although it changes according to audience responses, is based on a **Process** that we have developed at the Dancers' Workshop. This process grows from a concern for collective creativity, an approach that allows and encourages societal art based on diversity rather than conformity; on people's honest authenticity rather than on singular dogma. This results in an aesthetic appropriate and responsive to the commonalities that evolve from the differences of people's experiences. The workshop format is based on the fusion between personal-social growth and artistic activity. This leads to rituals, rites, and ceremonies that serve to acknowledge important moments and situations in individual and community life. As in ancient times, dance becomes vital to the people's lives. Then, there were dances for birth, death, healing, planting, war and peace. In today's society we once again have the opportunity to enhance and change the quality of our lives through our own active participation in creating and dancing our own dances together.

Closure Event

The final culminating event in our year-long series will be a City Score which, unlike the indoor space of the museum, will accommodate thousands of people and use the City of San Francisco as our performance environment together. Then, we will close with a celebration of building a "Totem" from found objects of personal meaning to each of us in Embarcadero Plaza near the Ferry Building. We hope by then to have the cooperation of other groups in the community who will join us and celebrate with a food-sharing ritual.

Won't you come and join us.? □

San Francisco Dancers' Workshop. Photo by Rudi Bender.


Dance
in Academe

by Margaret H'Doubler
Founder of the first collegiate dance department in America—at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; and a foremost pioneer and seminal influence in the development of dance in education.

What I am attempting to do is to present to you a way of thinking about dance as an educational force, when experienced as art creation in movement. It is a point of view that has affected my teaching and which led to the establishment of a dance major at the University of Wisconsin in 1926 and later to the master and doctoral degrees.

In preparing a case for dance as a full partner in the academic field the concept of dance as art creation in movement suggests basic areas to study as guidelines to an understanding of dance as an educational force. They are concepts to teach by and to teach for, that are within the reach of everyone.

One of the many concerns of education, regardless of the subjects taught, is to prepare the young to live creative, productive lives in the society in which they must live, and which they may wish to change. The language, customs, ethics—all must be learned in ways that will result in knowledges and skills and values that will contribute to a society of well-adjusted individuals who have discovered a way of life that is worth living. In this perspective we can say, to teach is to educate and to learn is to become educated and that education is for living.

This thought suggests the necessity of being informed of the nature of our endowment for living, that it can learn and be molded to the demands of existence. But what is existence? What is life? What does it mean to be born?

To be born is to be endowed with a quickening life force, the human spirit, that animates us throughout our individual lives. Life is our heritage and its direction is to live.

Man of all creatures is destined to scale the heights according to his capacity for vision. He is born into an environment that is not designed for him—therefore, it does not satisfy him. This has challenged him to seek control over his environment and the universe.

A lifetime is spent in seeking an effective relation between man and nature—between man and his fellow man—and between man and the instinctive demands of his own complex nature. Within these interactions, human energy is gathered and released with varying degrees of force resulting in experi-

dance as an educational force

ences that run the emotional gamut from great heights of ecstasy to the depths of despair. Individual endowment rounds this all out into a unique, thinking, sensitive, feeling, creative human being, and in the process man has civilized himself.

Although we may not be able to say what life is, it would be difficult to imagine life except in terms of impulse, desire, action—vibrant with feeling and emotions. It is a reality to be experienced and the meaning found must be in one's own terms.

Since art is a man-made activity, we need to understand man its creator. As teachers we need to understand the nature of human materials with which we have to work.

Human biology informs us that our physical, intellectual and emotional resources are living systems within our organic nature. They exist as goal-seeking, self-regulating, purposeful tendencies, that direct human development toward an integrated whole, each system assuming its destined role.

The skeletal system has a characteristic structure with its own purposeful principles of functioning; the muscular system also has its inborn principles which manifest rhythmic organization; and the nervous system, topped with its fabulous brain, functions as a communication and regulating system according to a destined plan—its function being to bring about a better adjustment to the demands of existence that life may continue. So interrelated are the physiological and psychological processes that there is no thought, feeling or act that is not affected to some degree.

These inborn tendencies to ultimate functioning and form exist as a built-in guidance system. They exist as psycho-physical dispositions with powerful motives to action. They have meant survival.

Thus arrives a new life, born with an urgency to live and develop in accordance with its own genetic heritage. At birth, this Mary—this John—is a person with an individuality of its own. To preserve this individuality, and save it from herd-like conformity, is one of education's most important challenges.

From this source arises an awareness of being the possessor of an individual endowment—of having an existence apart from others similarly endowed. This sense of "being" is "self," the conscious phase of our psychic nature. This "being," existing in relation to itself, this "me" within us is constantly seeking harmony between the instinctive drives for living and the restraints of an evolv-

ing conscience and the impinging demands of other "me's." Then we might ask not *who* am I? but *what* am I? Am I this that answers to a name only? Then what is this inside that thinks and feels, rejoices and suffers, remembers and forgets?

But what has this knowledge to do with the teaching of dance? It means that we should approach its instruction with a belief in and knowledge of the capacities and abilities for individuality; that the students are integrated personalities, sensitive and responsive, and capable of evaluating their own movement experiences, intelligently and aesthetically.

Such knowledge gives us confidence in the ability and the value of learning through conscious experiencing, and in the artistic validity of creating from consciously evaluated experience. Of course, science certainly can not make art, but it can contribute to a truthful art.

To understand movement as an art medium, it is necessary to understand man's instinctive adaptive behavior by which he has survived. Our inborn drives to think, feel and respond motorly are nature's plan for living. To live is our heritage. Our mental and physical responses are living, driving systems within our organic nature. They exist as a creative psycho-physical mechanism that operates with an instinctive intelligence of its own, that the primary nature instinctively obeys. It is a source of natural strength—ever present and ready to serve when called upon—with patterns of behavior that are its own, and which are the source of all human behavior. As an example, recall the demands made upon you to rush to a meeting—perhaps you had to run for a bus and missed it. You decided to cross the street and were caught in a rush of traffic and were forced to make your way back to the curb—sensing movement all around you. Finally you arrived safely at your destination—thankful that you made it. Such a reminder will help students realize that the movement of dance draws upon the same resources as the movements used in everyday living patterns—only the reason to move is different.

Margaret H'Doubler.

Students need this knowledge to be able to command their body instead of yielding to the impulse to move without direction and control.

Especially is such truthful factual knowledge needed for art production for evaluating and selecting and directing. Improvement is impossible without informed effort. The source of this knowledge is movement itself. We are our own laboratory textbook and teacher.

I realize there are many who believe that scientific knowledge and methods used to explore the basic material of one's art are detrimental to the creative art spirit—and to know the truth about the facts is cold and without warmth, and that the mental capacities of intuition and emotion are the only sources of feeling. Neither the facts as truthful information or undisciplined feeling, can lead to full understanding. Understanding is a fusion of appropriate feeling and truth. Science does not denounce emotion or intuition or devalue inspiration; on the contrary, it opens up new areas of truth and wonder that enrich and expand the aesthetic nature. Before dance can be appreciated as a particular art, we need to have an understanding of the nature and conditions of art in general.

My interest in art as an educational force is not only in its objects or forms, but in the fact that art is a "man-made" activity. What is it in human nature that gives rise to an impulse to fashion objects of beauty as he sees beauty—out of sights seen, things touched, movements sensed, sounds heard? A possible explanation is that due to the biological necessity for survival, based on meaningful and valuable experience, an interaction between self and environment occurs, wherein something of value is experienced.

Art is the only medium man has for expressing and communicating values and meanings found in everyday living experiences—values that are sensed as the result of the contact of man's mind with reality. They are qualities that reach beyond actualities and have more than ordinary significance and strength. They give rise to such heightened feeling states that their vitality demands a release into some form perceptible to the senses. This urge is the art impulse and the special kind of experience that awakens the response is an

aesthetic reaction. This experience does not possess a material aspect. It exists only as an inner image of the mind. To give it expression, it must be given an outward observable form, which will communicate the significance of what the imaginative mind created. This is the creative act. An unfiltered return as a copy would reveal little individual preference and selectivity. Art creation begins with experiences offered by the outer world or by the experiences of the inner subjective world of one's own mind. Regardless of the source, the creative art act begins with perception of sensation, followed by the imagination seeing possibilities of a satisfying "new reality," the form of which must be organically related to the change in concept. Man can fashion only as he knows. Thus it is that expressive art forms cannot escape being organically related to activities of the developing mind.

The developing artist, like the developing race, passes through the same progressive stages of artistic development and achievement—and it is important that each stage develops naturally from the preceding one and contributes to the advancement of the following one. Art, therefore, is a type of human behavior. It is dependent upon man for its creation and its execution, and man is dependent upon his art to represent him—to embody his ideals and visions. The story of art is the story of man's personal and cultural evolution—its forms changing as man has changed. Regardless of its many manifestations—the basic impulse remains the same—a deeply sensed need for expression and communication. It must be studied as a human activity. Art is a human necessity. "To create" suggests the entire process whereby things and ideas that did not exist before are conceived—given form—and brought into existence. A mystery seems to surround the nature of the creative act. The average person rarely uses the word to describe his own capacities. He thinks of creative ability as the special gift of the artists and geniuses in other fields. He has little understanding that the creative process is Nature's basic principle of survival and growth. How important to know that its principles are imbedded in the very structure and functioning of man's *biological* nature, and that these principles are biological principles before they are art principles. Man's survival is evidence of life's creative principle of goal-seeking and problem-solving to meet the demands of existence.

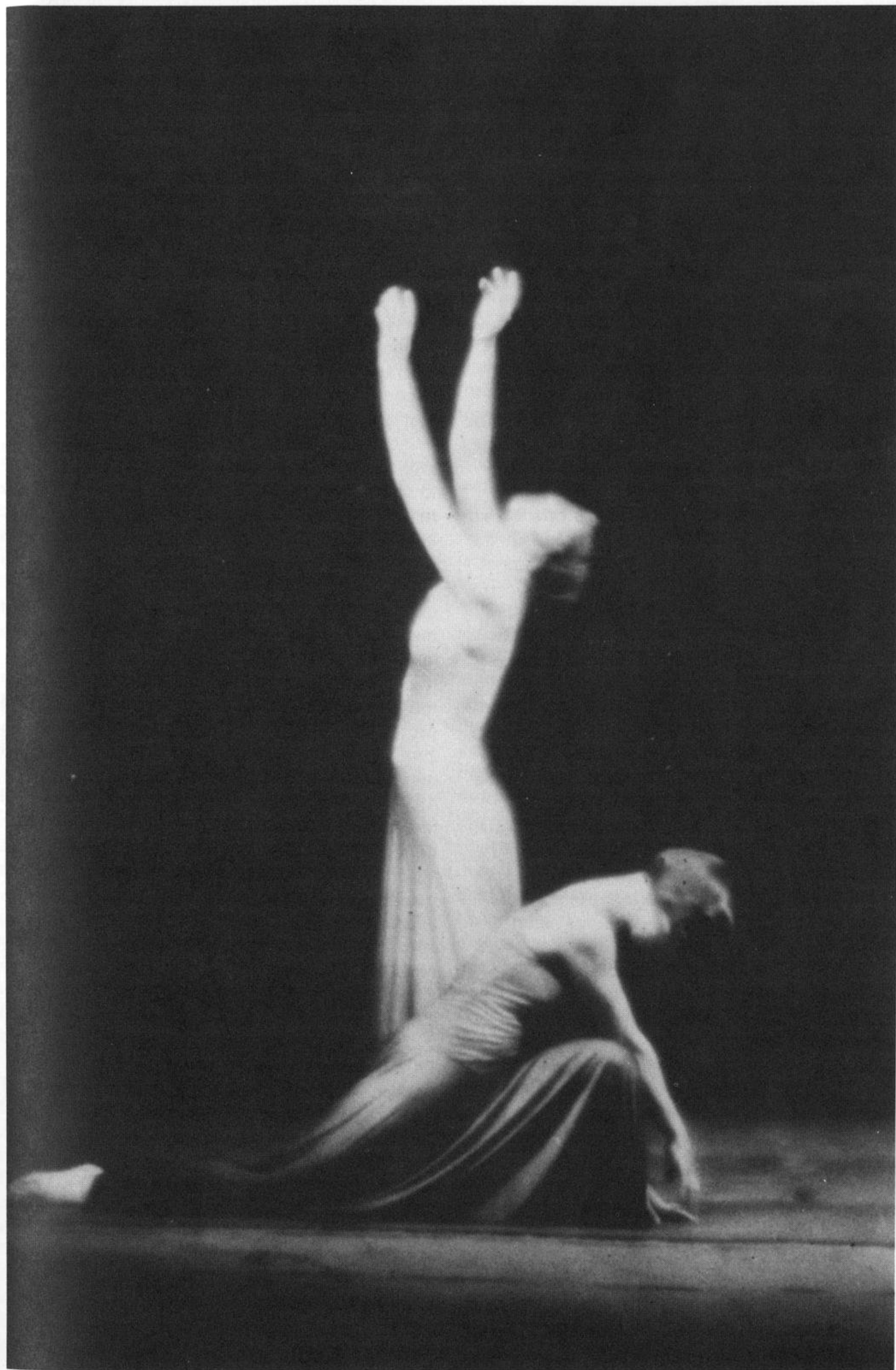
Since creativeness has its source in nature's plan for survival, we must view it as an innate capacity possessed in some degree by everyone, and when the capacity one has is permitted to be carried to its simplest production, it can be as psychologically satisfying as the efforts of the more gifted.

The creative process is the same, whether dealing with problems of daily existence or with the art act of giving form to the aesthetic values discovered in these experiences. Creative activity is a relating of values into new organizations of form that, for the doer, never existed before. Creative effort is present whenever the creative mind is at work, no matter what the field of endeavor may be.

Creative effort stimulates the intellectual and emotional and physical growth, by challenging one's abilities to discover new meanings, make selections and organize them into an expressive form.

Our inborn creativeness is our most human trait and to preserve and nourish it is one of education's greatest concerns. Creative activity, then is doing, a manipulation of materials which may be either thoughts or things. It combines knowledges of things one has at the moment, revealing a personal relation to them. It is this identification of self with one's own acts that is the significance of creative effort, and it contributes as much to a complete integration within the self. This is because, when engaging in any type of effort with a creative attitude, the individual is forced to face the content of his own personality and make selections from it. He seeks to identify himself with the ideal meaning of his experiences and in so doing he is forced to exercise critical judgment of self. Creative results usually are accompanied by an heightened self-awareness and with it an element of discovery of self. From each new creation one gains new knowledges, revealing new meanings and values that are applicable to his personal development as well as to his artistic growth.

In summary, then, the ultimate value of any art as a creative activity and production is its vitalizing effect. This vitalizing effect is experienced when working at any endeavor



with a creative attitude. What is this attitude then? Essentially, it is accepting the content of one's own personality in relation to the task at hand, selecting from it, and exercising critical judgment in seeking the meaning of one's own experiences.

Every art has its technique for fashioning its forms that are determined by the demands of the physical forces of its medium. Just as the painter struggles with color—brush—and surface and the musician with tone and instrument, so does the dancer struggle with the complexities of joints, bone-levers, nerves and muscles.

Since dance is art creation in movement, all the factors concerned with human motion are very much the concern of the dancer. The skeleton with its system of bone-levers and joints makes possible an endless variety of movement, which makes us realize how broad its technical study for dance can be. But the skeleton being an inanimate structure cannot initiate its own actions. It cannot start or stop itself. To be put in motion, it depends upon action of the attached muscle system which in turn is dependent upon the nervous system. Our neuro-muscular system is a physiological behavior equipment possessing reflex paths and an infinite variety of activities that can be modified. It is by means of this structure that specific skills can be developed. It is highly modifiable and needs to be educated "by doing." This knowledge is basic to the understanding that a movement, by nature, embodies and reflects the nature of the nerve stimulus. Especially is this important to the instructor when evaluating students' efforts in solving a movement problem. It is also important to the student in becoming aware of his own reactions and being capable of evaluating his results through self-critical examination. Much helpful information concerning the skeletal structure, the nervous system, and muscles can be had from lectures, the laboratory, and the use of charts and models, but knowledge stops here. It cannot supply sensation by which movement can be known. All that we can individually know must be fashioned by ourselves out of kinesthetically perceived sensations of our own acts. Again we are reminded that we are our own laboratory, textbook and teacher.

To discover the principles upon which the body moves as a physical object is to discover the body's own technique—how it can and does move—what to expect and how to get it, which is basic to building one's own style of movement.

As a result of man's endowment for moving structurally and rhythmically—human motion appears in patterns of ever changing linear designs, which in dance, serve as silent agents of communication and expression. They please the senses and delight the mind, resulting in aesthetic responses.

Students need opportunity to discover for themselves the movement possibilities within the range of the skeletal structure and to become aware of the associated feeling states that are evoked by their own acts.

With knowledge and sensitivity students learn to choose and direct their own movement responses. Their selection is intelligent and individual and usually is accompanied with a sense of achievement. Such a learning experience places the responsibility upon the student. He learns to evaluate for himself the meanings and values he discovers and to initiate appropriate movement responses.
It is within these responses that is revealed the student's understanding of the movement problem as originally set up. He becomes aware of how he is reacting to his own movements—thus becoming identified with them in a subjective-objective relationship between himself, as the subject of his moving body and his body—a relationship that is essential to all creative dance endeavor. This objective-subjective relation between the "knowing subject" and the "object known" forms the structure essential to a vital learning experience in any field, for the subjective phase of experience can act creatively only as it is interactive with the stimulating forces.

To want to dance is the desire to experience aesthetic values in movement. There is kinesthetic pleasure in sensations of haste, of strength, of moving through space, of leaping in defiance of gravity and falling in obedience to its pull, and in the heightened pleasure of abandoning one's self to a stirring rhythm and the satisfaction in just obeying the impulse to move. But when does movement become dance? In the light of what has been discussed, we can say that movement becomes dance when its factors are intentionally formed and executed to evoke

aesthetic feeling states. Thus, movement is the source of meaning as well as the medium for expressing and communicating. This means that when he is dancing, the dancer's movements communicate back to him, and he must be constantly aware of them and their effect upon him. If the dancer is not stimulated by the truth and beauty of his own movements, there will be no communication either to the dancer or to an observer, if an observer is present. This kind of concentration is the secret of projection. Both the dancer and the audience must be aroused to an aesthetic reaction, for the "feedback" into consciousness, completes the creative integrating act.

Thus dance may be considered a neural projection of inner thought and feeling into movement, rhythm being the mold through which the creative life flows in giving its meaning form. The vitalizing and revitalizing effect of creative effort and production is the ultimate value of any creative art experience. Through creative experience one's acts come to have significance for the self, the basis of character.

Movement being such a vital experience, it is to be expected that when experienced as an art medium dance can play an important part in the enrichment of an individual life.

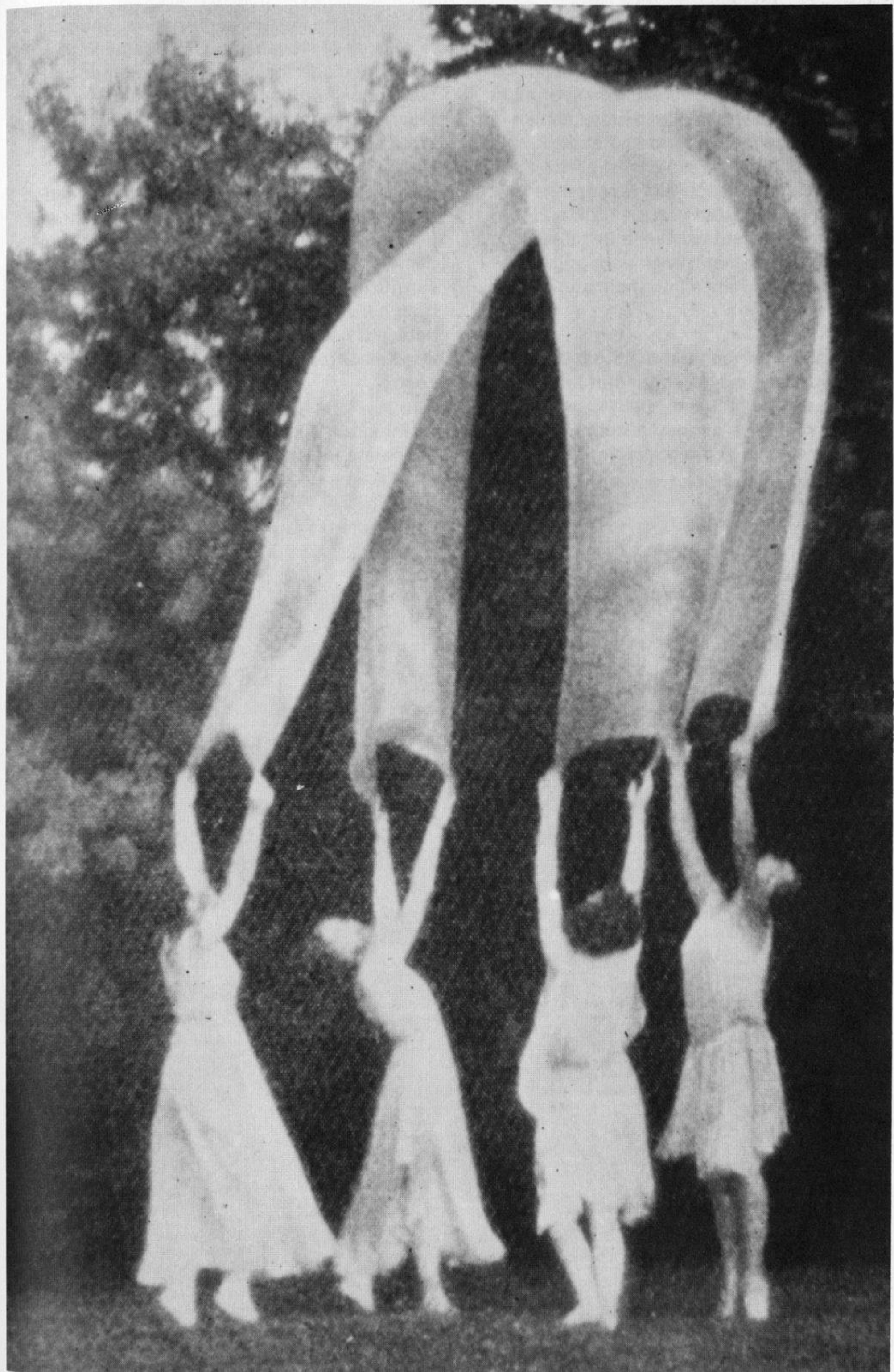
Until a student understands his own subjective control of his body he is likely to be inhibited in his movements, resulting in self-consciousness, a state of awareness that is not due to a lack of sensitivity and feeling, but the inability to maintain the movement in an objective form of its expression. It is the rhythmic organization that supplies the needed principles of organization and discipline for it demands obedience and sustains effort.

To understand rhythm, we need to understand the nature of nerve-muscle action. It is the alternating contraction and relaxation of the muscle function that is the basis of rhythm. Bodily movement, therefore, implies muscle action which manifests itself in a period of action followed by a period of rest. Within these two phases are elements of time and force—some long, some short; some strong, some weak—in accordance with the nature of the nerve impulse. It is how these two factors of time and force are proportioned within a given movement, that determines the rhythmic structure of that movement.

Analysis, if approached with the spirit of investigation and discovery, should result in an enrichment that is "something more" than the original experience, due to the clarification of understanding and faith in the truth of its reality.

Rhythm needs to be understood as a form-giving and sustaining principle in all our acts—those of everyday tasks—athletic skills—and movement used in the production of all the arts, for it is movement that brings them into existence. Rhythm is the mold through which the creative life flows in giving form to its expression.

Because dance makes its appearance in visible moving patterns, there is often the mistake made in thinking of its forms only as movement discipline, without an appreciation of the contributions that have preceded. Consequently, in many instances, major emphasis has come to be placed on isolated skills and stylized gestures and steps instead of on creative effort. Too intense a pursuit of excellency of execution in the early stages of study, demands a kind of effort that is likely to dull the mental activities of sensitivity, intuition, spontaneity and creative imagination—those psychic forces that are needed to modulate the physical forces of the body instrument. Although the kinesthetic and rhythmic approach to the study of movement is not based upon a prescribed system of steps and gestures, this does not mean its study is without direction and discipline. Its discipline is self-imposed by the application of the knowledge of the principles of human motion. Technique, as painstaking effort, should be worked for at every stage of development, according to the students' need at the time. There is a definite training for the perfection of bodily movement in accordance with its structural principles and limitations. From such a study there gradually develops knowledge of the materials of dance and the relation that exists between tension and feeling qualities. With the body as instrument, and movement as the medium, the student with what abilities he has at the time, shapes and executes movements that unite form and content. He can fashion only as he knows—but each resulting dance is truly an art creation for that stage of development.



Technique in its broadest sense refers to the whole process, mental and physical, which enables the dancer to embody aesthetic values into his compositional forms, brought into existence by disciplined movements. In this sense, technique, form and expression are three interdependent aspects of all art expression, for as soon as the message is expressed it has been given a form and the form is brought into existence by movement. Technique is aesthetic engineering; it transforms aesthetic values into the material forms of their expression.

Beyond the knowledge of the structural determinants of movement and of the sensorial factors of rhythm and of the knowledge of the laws of motion as they effect movement, lies the message of the dancer.

The knowledge of kinesthesia, and the deepening knowledge of movement and rhythm, and of the relation between feeling and its movement expression are trends which are influencing the developing techniques according to forms that are inherent in movements because of body structure and function, rather than techniques developed for visual appearance alone. A change in the technical study of dance naturally brings about a change in its theory and philosophy and vice versa. As a result, dance today is accepted as a creative art form, expressing and communicating the dancer's values as he knows them. The concept of contemporary dance is not a prescribed system; it is dance conceived in terms of all that we know today of its science, its philosophy, and its claim to art. Perhaps it might be helpful, and cause less confusion to think of our students as modern youth dancing, instead of their performing "modern dance." For after all, any art form is modern in its time. Dance today is the contemporary phase of dance in its development toward greater universality.

Creative ability has many applications to life and can contribute much to improve the quality of living. It is a means of becoming sensitive to quality values in one's environment, not only as found in the arts, but also as they can be observed in nature and human relations. Because of the nature of creative effort, participation in it can contribute to a heightened and critical awareness of life, not only in evaluating experiences, but also in creating the forms of their expression.

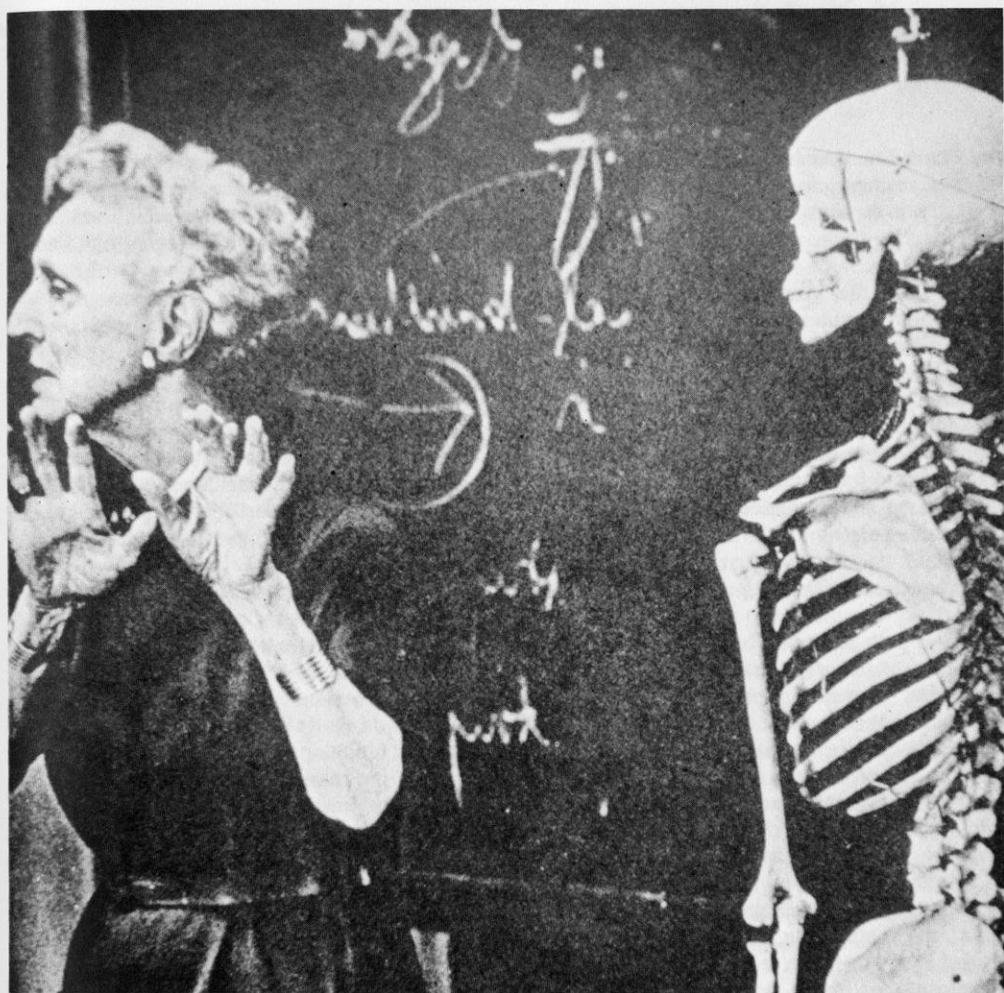
Students bring a wealth of natural endowment to a study of movement. They come with a structure made for action, and another for its perception and control, a rich inheritance of reaction patterns, and an innate love to move. What are we doing with this endowment? Nature adequately provided the means for self-expression through movement; education must provide the ways. Not until provision is made in the curriculum for creative activities can we hope to renew much-needed aesthetic sensitivity in our lives today and be freed from herd-like conformity. Although movement does not need mind for its existence, it does need mind for its clarification, direction and control.

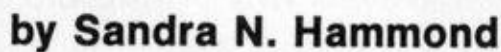
To integrate one's self within a group, and to cooperate intelligently with his fellow men, one first must feel the security and self-value which comes from integration within the self. Self-understanding is the basis of understanding other selves. The individual's culture as well as the culture of the social order is dependent upon man's ability to create and produce. These are human qualities which must be saved. To release and foster creativity is one of education's greatest challenges. □

In closing I would like to quote from Lord Byron:

> *'Tis to create, and in creating live*
> *A being more intense, that we endow with form*
> *Our fancy, gaining as we give*
> *The life we image.*

All photographs appearing in this article were the courtesy of Professor Mary Lou Remley, Dance Division, and the Women's Physical Education Department, University of Wisconsin.





by Sandra N. Hammond
She is an instructor in dance at the University of Arizona.

It has been fifty years since Margaret H'Doubler persuaded the University of Wisconsin that dance deserved a degree program. The diversity and proliferation of dance on college campuses since then makes hazardous indeed any forecast of the next fifty years. Nevertheless, certain trends are unmistakable and thus tempt speculation about how dance and the universities will continue their relatively new alliance. For dance, the oldest of art forms, is just now in its academic adolescence.

Clearly, college dance has shed its baby-buntings of flowing gauze shirts, its early image as "something for the girls" in women's physical education departments. Those departments are rapidly becoming co-ed, but, just as rapidly, dance is demanding its own department, located somewhere in the vicinity of theatre/performing arts colleges. Whether dance should abandon its physical education nest, the only home it was offered for so long, and cross the campus to join the fine arts complex, is becoming a moot question. The move is being made, and new proposals for dance programs are laid directly at the fine arts' door. Nevertheless, as will be discussed later, dance encompasses more than performance. Programs which affiliate exclusively with fine arts colleges may find they do not meet the new demands of dance-related interests.

The Artist on Campus—Today and Tomorrow

The validity of dance major programs and college degrees in dance may still be questioned by both academicians and dance professionals, but the debate now is decidedly less intense. The "peril" of dance in the universities and colleges, as eloquently described by Carolyn Brown[1], Agnes de Mille[2], and other professional dancers, is greatly reduced, not least by dance professionals themselves who are on dance faculties around the country.

Thus the danger of insularity—college-trained-teachers teaching more teachers—has disappeared from many campuses where administrators have recognized the importance of professional artists on their faculties. Clearly, this is a trend that will continue because it has benefits for both the academy and the artist. Colleges sometimes give artists regular or part-time academic appointments. Other times artists-in-residence for one or more semesters are appointed. Whatever the exact

dance in the universities – the first and second fifty years

approach, at least the college dance student earns a degree in a performing art from a faculty which includes professional performers of that art.

Most dance major programs have some students who aspire to be professional dancers. For most that goal is unrealistic, and for all it is tough to achieve. Here, then, is an important reason to have the professional dancer on the faculty—to provide first-hand experience with respect to the competitive dance world outside the academy. The advice and the contacts provided by such a person need to be available to any college dance major.

But more important than employment counseling is the value of the artist on campus for assuring the vitality of dance itself. To observe Antony Tudor choreograph, for example, has to be an invaluable education for dance students on the Urvine campus where Tudor has been periodically in residence. Or consider the opportunity to study four years with George Zoritch (University of Arizona) or David Wood (University of California at Berkeley). In the first instance, dance majors have the experience of regular instruction in the style of Russian ballet, and, in the second, in the theatre of Martha Graham—both from artists with first-hand experience. This is not, of course, to argue that any artist should be hired on a university faculty. Some are not good teachers, let alone adaptable to other features of the academic role. An artistic appointment must be screened and evaluated as carefully as any other faculty appointment.

For the artist, the campus base has great economic benefits. For some, of course, those benefits do not outweigh the burdens of committee assignments, grading of students, faculty meetings, etc. For others, however, those are small enough penalties if, in exchange, the opportunity exists to choreograph and rehearse in rent-free space with "free" dancers, to obtain a technical crew (including costuming and publicity) at no personal cost—all this preparatory to performances in some of the finest theatres in the country, oftentimes with live music (glory, even on occasion a full orchestra). Furthermore, there are colleagues in art, music, drama, and other disciplines with which to collaborate and a ready-made audience of hundreds, yea thousands, of students.

As costs soar, and artistic deficits rise, more performing artists may well look to universities for their very survival. Many civic theatres, symphonies, ballet and modern dance companies, now struggling for slices of the tax pie and competing for the dwindling

gifts from foundations and wealthy patrons, can be expected to move under the artistic umbrella of some college or university.

The dance artists on campuses, and the university-connected dance companies that have emerged, clearly have economic advantages over their civic counterparts. This advantage will remain until, miraculously, the public demands live drama, opera, symphonic music, ballet and concert dance in preference to television and rock concerts. Needless to say, dancers should not hold their *port de bras* in anticipation of such events.

Dance Education—Present and Future

Even as the university appears destined to become the next patron of the dance arts and a conservatory for training performers, it does not and will not limit enrollment to aspiring performers. The university functions not merely to train people for jobs. Indeed, the majority of dance majors should not be enrolled if employment in a dance company is their expectation following four years of college. Instead, universities will continue to offer dance as another area of general education, a liberal and not just a fine art.

Where better than at a university could so many be introduced to the great variety of dance related subjects? Where else can the interests of the young in those subjects be encouraged and guided? Dance history and philosophy, dance writing and criticism, dance notation, dance lighting and costuming, dance accompaniment—all this in addition to the craft of dance itself—constitute a healthy education. Add to this the stimulation provided by other liberal arts courses in the general college requirements, and one need not be embarrassed about the "dance" major.

Rite of Spring, Frances Cohen, choreographer. Dancers: Sandra Hammond and John Wilson. Arizona Dance Theatre. Photo by Timothy Fuller.

Undeniably, college dance programs offer creative experiences for students and the preparation of dance-educated audiences. These "by-products" of dance education may well be justification enough for dance major programs, but other, more pragmatic, reasons for dance degrees are emerging. In spite of economic woes, dance is gaining in popularity and thus in public visibility. Dance and dancers are not so "strange" to a public which sees Baryshnikov on the cover of **Time** and **Newsweek** or which reads a regular dance column by Arlene Croce in **The New Yorker.** The popular media thus are recogniz-

Water Study by Doris Humphrey as reconstructed by Ray Cook of The Dance Notation Bureau, 1976. Photo by Charles Conley.

ing dance as newsworthy. They will need more writers who can research, describe, and critique dance; the university can be a training ground for such literate dancers.

The demand for dance therapists is likewise increasing as appreciation grows for what dance offers to those with mental, physical, or emotional handicaps. Training in dance therapy typically occurs at the graduate level, it is true, but most undergraduate programs offer some courses directly related to therapy. The dance major—frequently including courses in psychology, anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, motor skill development, and the like—can be a sound background for the student intent on graduate work in therapy. The prevention and care of dance injuries is an important area sadly ignored thus far. Courses in athletic training might be adapted for the student interested in therapy for professional or student dancers.

Obviously the preparation of dance teachers has always been a primary function of college dance programs. The tremendous growth of those programs is beginning to filter down the scholastic ladder. With the encouragement of state and national programs, such as Artists-in-the-Schools, dance teachers (movement specialists) are having contact even with kindergarten through sixth grades. That dance benefits everybody need not be extolled here, but dance (movement) as another tool for learning academic subjects is only now being recognized by dancers and educators alike. University dance programs are a logical training ground for those combining movement with elementary and secondary school teacher training.

The dance experience envisioned fifty years ago by Margaret H'Doubler is not yet universal, but it has certainly proved to be versatile. Having found common ground with physical education, fine and liberal arts, dance programs in the next fifty years will most certainly continue their expansion into college curricula. The present vitality and diversity of both dance and higher education suggests no other outcome. □

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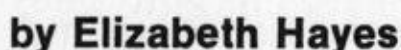
[1]Carolyn Brown, "The Perils of Dance in the Colleges", *Ballet Review,* Vol. 3, No. 6, 1971, pp. 50-56.

[2]Agnes de Mille, *To a Young Dancer* (Boston-Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1962) pp. 42-76.



by Elizabeth Hayes
Director of Modern Dance, University of Utah

For many years the principal function of dance education in colleges and universities was that of providing a pleasurable form of physical and sometimes creative activity for the masses. The program was not designed to prepare students to become professional dancers. College prospects who had a professional dance career as their goal were advised to forget a liberal education and to rush posthaste to New York where they could study first-hand with famous professional dancers who were teaching in order to support their companies. As interest in dance and the demand for qualified teachers increased, physical education curriculums were expanded to encompass the specialized preparation of dance teachers. The first teacher-education major curriculum for dance, established by Margaret H'Doubler at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1927, provided an exemplary model for other institutions. The program centered around a scientific understanding of the human body and how it operates as well as around an awareness of human behavior, and the universal need to create and communicate. The new curriculum utilized opportunities afforded by the University to study biology, human anatomy, physiology and kinesiology as well as psychology and philosophy. Students were exposed to courses in the related arts—particularly music and art history. And within the dance curriculum itself there were courses in rhythmic analysis, dance history and dance philosophy—especially as it applied to education, and there were also opportunities for student teaching. The technique offerings were limited in comparison to present day standards, and there were no formal laboratory classes in composition; but there were ample opportunities for students to improvise and to make creative discoveries in their technique classes, and to compose dances extracurricularly. Regrettably, not all institutions that later undertook the training of dance teachers patterned their programs after such a well-rounded model.

The scope of dance education in universities as described above remained little changed for some fifteen or twenty years. However, creation of the famous Bennington College Summer School of Dance in the middle thirties brought dance educators and professionals together with the result that dance in education was now made technically more challenging than before, and college students were introduced to formalized approaches to dance composition. Student dance concerts in universities became increasingly mature

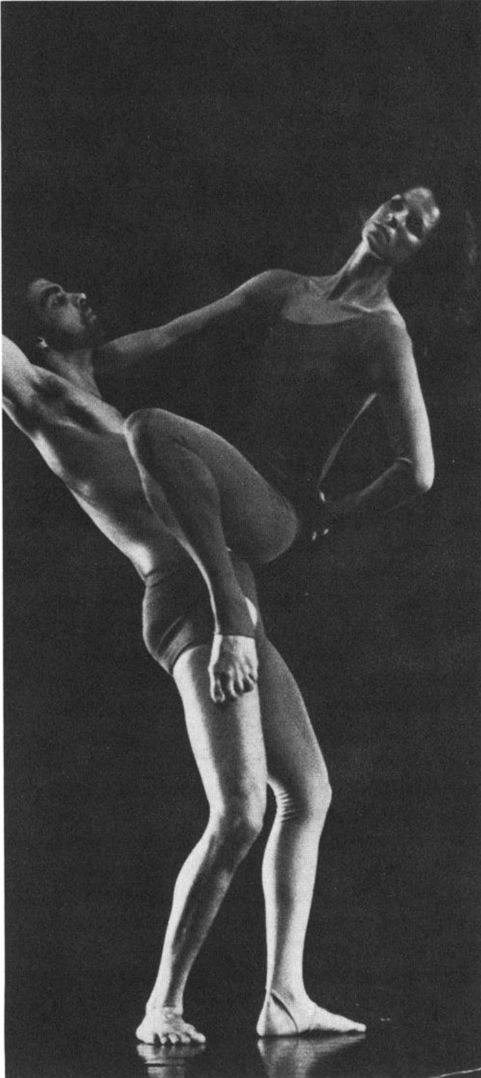
dance in the universities: yesterday, today and tomorrow

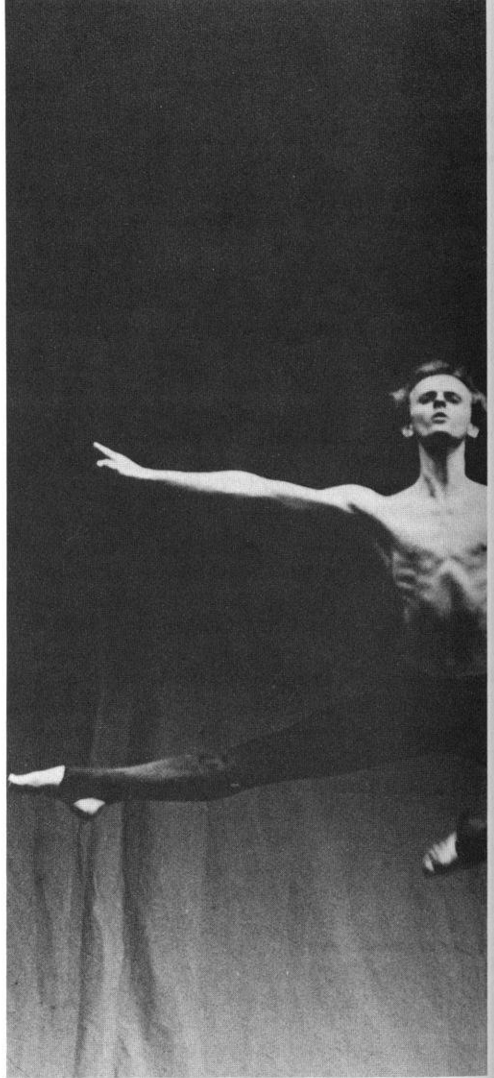
and sophisticated. The effect of this nudge from the professional world was to establish in the minds of university administrators the realization that dance was more than just an activity in physical education; it was potentially a legitimate art form worthy of taking a place among the other arts. The great administrative move of dance programs began in the early sixties. In some instances dance was placed administratively in music or theatre departments; in other instances it was made a department of its own, but the end result was that dance educators were at last freed of the conceptual limitations that had been imposed upon them by the assumption that dance was merely a subdivision of physical education—an assumption that unfortunately still exists in many institutions.

The initial outcome of this administrative change was first evidenced in the upgrading of already existing teacher education programs. The curricular structure of the dance major that had been established at Wisconsin was still basically sound, but now there was opportunity to enlarge the program and to reschedule class periods to satisfy needs peculiar to the dancer. Both technical and choreographic offerings could be extended to create a four year progression, and long time blocks, which were needed for the efficient teaching of technique and composition, could be allocated to replace the 35-50 minute class periods that had previously been so restrictive. Kinesiology as taught by physical educators—often with little application to dance—could now be replaced by a kinesiological approach dealing directly with the analysis and control of dance movement. Dance students, relieved of the demand that they become physical educators as well as dance educators could devote increased energies to in-depth studies of dance history and philosophy, music and other related arts. Adequate time could now be given to such theatre aspects as staging, lighting, and costuming which are essential to the dance educators as well as those who plan to enter the so-called "professional world." And finally, increased opportunities and budget for student performances could be provided to enable future teachers to learn through personal experience the meaning of dance as a performing art.

This move to free dance from its dependence upon physical education called attention to a long existing problem of secondary school certification for dance teachers. Up to this time, in rare instances where dance specialists had been certified, these teachers had received their certification as physical educators with a dance emphasis. For independent departments of dance this kind of certification was no longer possible. As yet,

only a handful of states have acted to recognize that dance is as legitimate an area for independent certification as art or music. Many high school students have never had the privilege of a dance experience. And in high schools where a feeble attempt is made to teach dance by inadequately prepared teachers, the dance programs are likely to remain static. Thus, a vicious circle is established—the classes create little student interest, so there is insufficient demand for dance specialists, so student interest does not grow, and so on around the circle ad infinitum. On the other hand, in secondary schools where well trained dance teachers are employed there is ample evidence that dance is not only popular, but the quality of the program and the student interest is more than sufficient to justify the continual training and certification of dance specialists. If there are ever to be quality programs in dance throughout our high schools, teacher certification is essential. It is high time that secondary schools assume some of the responsibility for providing worthwhile dance experiences for all who desire them, and for elevating the level of appreciation and enjoyment of dance as an art form. Eventually we must turn our attention to certification for dance in elementary schools where the flame of creativity still flickers tenuously.





Returning again to the university scene, once a sound and fully developed dance education program has been put into operation it is an easy step to establish a curriculum for the preparation of professional dancers and choreographers (provided the right faculty are available) since the core of dance knowledge and experience is the same for everyone. The extended program for professional dancers requires that students be exposed to many kinds of dance based upon an extensive foundation in both ballet and modern techniques. These diverse experiences may include jazz, tap and various forms of ethnic dance as well as dance styles characteristic of various historical periods. It is not the role of universities, however, to imprint upon students the stylistic characteristics of any one professional dancer. Dance in universities should provide the broad base of movement experience from which the dancer himself can later evolve his own technical style. A university program purporting to develop dance choreographers must be equipped to provide not only ample opportunity for these students to choreograph and show their works to the public, but also dance faculty members who are themselves choreographers of excellence, able to guide these students and to help them to evaluate the results of their artistic endeavors.

There are still critics in dance education and especially in the professional dance world who hold that the appropriate role for universities is not one of preparing professional dancers; they are convinced that such accomplishments are not possible in an academic atmosphere where various faculties compete for the time and energies of the students. Their voices, however, are growing fewer. How many young aspiring dancers today who go to New York are able to afford even two daily classes in their professional studies or to find the studio space and professional guidance to try their hand at choreography?

In universities across the nation the fact is that the roles of all the arts have become more professionally oriented in recent years as administrators have begun to give recognition to the fine arts in the total educational scheme. Through their expanded functions, colleges and departments of fine arts are in a sense replacing the old music conservatories, dramatic schools, and dance and art academies with their narrowly focused curriculums. The best of the fine arts departments in universities are providing their students with the facilities and faculty expertise that they need to complete their basic professional studies but with the added advantage of being able to make available resources and course offerings in a multitude of other disciplines to stimulate the potential artist. No matter what the technical skill of the artist, he cannot contribute much to his art if his mind is a vacuum. Although at present, the number of universities are few that have dance programs of adequate scope and quality to offer successful performing or choreographic major programs, there are enough to prove that such educational endeavors can be successful. It is the professional dancers and choreographers from such programs as these who are providing the talent for community repertory dance companies that are emerging today. These young artists are thereby helping to decentralize the arts, making them available to every corner of the nation. From today's young repertory companies—which are the proving grounds for talent—hopefully will come some of the great artists of tomorrow. Some university dance departments have also moved into directions of specialized performance such as that of musical theatre—an enterprise that depends for its success upon the equal collaboration of departments of theatre, music and dance.

Synapse and Earth, Utah Repertory Dance Theatre. Photos by Leon Reese and Doug Bernstein.

At the graduate level there are numerous opportunities for professional specialization. A growing interest and belief in the values of dance as therapy have created a need for trained therapists. The Dance Therapy Association which has set standards for accreditation of therapists has advised that at the undergraduate level the best preparation for this profession is a broadly based dance major. Specialized study, including clinical apprenticeships, should begin at the graduate level.

Perhaps because dancers, generally speaking, tend to be performers and creators rather than researchers, the whole area of dance research is still more or less in its infancy. But as dancers begin to pursue their art with increased understanding, they are realizing that as Margaret H'Doubler has often said,

although science cannot make art, it can make for a more truthful art. Interest is being increasingly directed, for example, to a scientific examination of dance techniques and their presumed efficacy in achieving the technical goals for which they were designed. There has also been a burgeoning of anthropological and historical inquiry. Research efforts to interpret dance literature and to unravel early forms of dance notation are making possible the reconstruction of dances from various historical periods. Other areas that offer challenges for graduate study are in such fields as education, ethnic dance, film techniques, aesthetics, and criticism. The imminent retirement of many of the dance pioneers who have created and administered many of the presently existing dance major programs has pointed to a growing need for doctoral programs that can prepare potential department chairmen for their administrative duties, in addition providing opportunity for further research studies.

Although there has been a dramatic growth of interest in dance research, by far the most popular kind of graduate project or thesis is the choreographic thesis. Performance and choreography will always be of paramount importance to those in the performing arts. There have been a few courageous attempts to establish professional repertory companies in connection with dance departments to serve as living laboratories for talented graduate students, who in turn contribute a cultural service to their states and communities. Such companies, however, have proven to be far too expensive for universities to maintain without continuous outside subsidy. As a result, most such experiments, in spite of their obvious meirts, have been shortlived.

Except for minor set-backs, dance in education is ceasing to be the Cinderella of the arts. More and more colleges and universities are moving to include dance as a part of their major offerings. Some of these programs are very good; others are less so. Perhaps as a result of student pressures or misguided ambition there is a temptation for dance departments to proliferate programs and to take on responsibilities for which there are insufficient faculty, facilities and administrative funds. Marvels can sometimes be accomplished in spite of poor facilities and minimal finances, but a department can only be as good as its faculty. Recent hiring practices by colleges of fine arts, deemphasizing the importance of advanced degrees, dwelling instead upon candidates' artistic talents and experience, have done much to give dance departments the freedom to employ the most qualified people wherever they may be found. Employment of visiting artists-in-residence can supplement the special talents of a regular department faculty. But it is the competence of the regular faculty, not of the visiting guest artists, that ultimately determines the quality and reputation of a department.

A wise plan for any department is to examine its own human and physical resources before deciding upon a course of action in establishing or expanding a department curriculum. Another important consideration is the faculty-student ratio. Although a physics professor can successfully deliver a lecture to a class of four hundred, students in the arts require a teacher's personal attention. A department that allows itself to become too large dilutes its ability to give service to its students.

Finally, in order for a department faculty to operate effectively, an educational philosophy needs to be established to guide its members and to enable them to work together in mutual harmony. This is not to imply that all teachers must think or teach alike but rather that their various approaches to dance and modes of operation must be mutually supportive and contribute to the attainment of identified department goals. Professional dissension among a faculty is counterproductive to progress for all concerned.

As director of a dance major program over a period of many years, my personal philosophy of dance education has been based upon a number of assumptions: 1) Both creative and recreational dance are natural forms of human activity and the birthright of every individual. 2) Dance as a fine art provides an important means of human expression and communication. 3) In order for the dancer to realize this expressive potential it is necessary for him to master his art instrument, which is his body, through awareness of its movement capabilities, through creative exploration in the discovery of movement forms, and through acquisition of skill in the performance of them. 4) Dance in education should be approached in terms of movement concepts rather than in terms of personalized

styles and techniques. 5) It is through his kinesthetic experience that a student becomes aware of the expressive powers of movement. 6) For a dancer to communicate successfully through movement he must have something to say; and for him to have something to say he must become sensitive to his environment and his fellowman; he must learn to see, to feel, to think and to listen.

It therefore follows that dance in education has a responsibility to meet the needs of students at all levels of ability. And it is the role of the dance educator to help each individual student to discover and have faith in his own potential; to provide the necessary discipline for the student to achieve his professional goals; to give him the freedom and encouragement to explore and pursue his own creative endeavors; to inspire the student to have the courage to expand his experience beyond the comfortable and familiar; and to help him to find acceptable criteria by which to evaluate intelligently the results of his efforts. It is my belief that such an approach to dance education will contribute not only to the professional development of the dancer as a teacher, researcher, critic, or creative artist, but also to the enrichment of the individual as a human being and member of society. □

Games, Donald McKayle, choreographer. Utah Repertory Dance Theatre. Photo by Doug Bernstein.

Symposium: Training the Dancer

Prof. Theodora Wiesner in dance studio, 1950's.

Theodora Wiesner
Professor Emeritus, Brooklyn College.

What kind of dance education can/should universities provide?

Dance in colleges and universities should include a wide spectrum of dance activities: modern, ballet, folk, tap, etc., the range depending on whether or not there is a major program. It should include *more* than technique. There should be creative work, improvisation, performance, etc. In a *major* program history, philosophy, music, methods of teaching and notation should be included.

Is there a philosophy of dance education today?

Every teacher should have a philosophy, but I doubt that there is one philosophy that all agree on. I feel that an educational program should include a broad understanding of the whole area of dance and provide an opportunity for the students to create and perform dance on the highest level of excellence possible.

Should dance most logically fall into physical education or fine arts?

Dance should be on its own—separate from physical education, music, or theatre. The ideal is that of an autonomous dance department within a school of performing arts.

Do you feel that the best way that companies can be made financially solvent is to be subsidized by a university?

University dance companies should be supported by the institutions as much as orchestras, theatre groups, choruses, and interscholastic athletics. Any performing art costs money and can seldom meet expenses through concert admissions.

The proliferation of university-connected dance companies indicates the rapid growth of interest in dance, its acceptance as an academic discipline, and the rising level of excellence in dance education.

A recent study has highlighted the inflexibility of music departments (most departments in 1972 did not teach courses in jazz, blues, rock, etc.). Is dance in academe confronted with similar problems?

Not too long ago, college and university dance included only some form of free modern dance, some folk dance, and maybe a bit of tap. Now most programs include modern or contemporary dance at a number of skill levels, ballet, jazz, folk, tap, composition or choreography, and many related arts.

Would artist-in-residence programs help to mitigate the dangers of insularity?

Such a program can add additional depth to the dance offerings, the experience with a professional approach, and a variety in styles and techniques that most universities would be unable to provide with their more limited staff.

Should dance teachers be certified?

Yes! □

William Bales
Emeritus Dean, Division of Dance, College at Purchase, State University of New York.

What kind of dance education can/should universities provide?

Every university in America should provide programs in dance for its students. The programs should be presented as experiences in the art of dance to all students (male and female) by well trained and highly qualified teachers. Since the language of dance is movement, every student should be exposed to general courses in movement experience to acquire a fundamental knowledge of the language and its basic laws of organization as a communicative art. (Athletic activity is a natural concomitant of movement, but should not be the goal of the dance experience).

Dance, therefore, should strive to provide a liberating, exhilarating, and communicative experience for students. The study of movement skills, movement styles, and movement forms should lead naturally to aesthetic and expressive investigation. Students who wish to continue more intensive experiences in dance should be permitted to do so. Integration of dance with music, visual art, drama, poetry, aesthetics, psychology, history, etc. are logical sequential experiences.

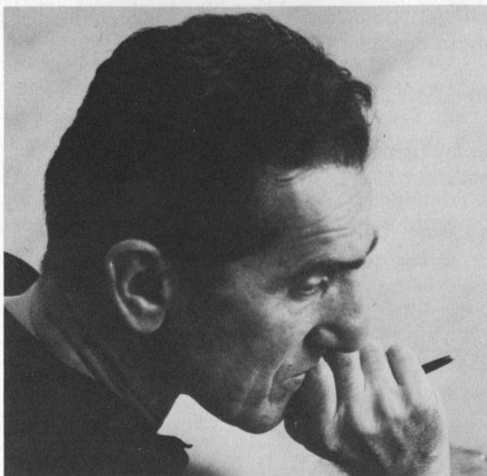
When a university is able to establish a degree program in the field, many other options are possible.

Should dance most logically fall into physical education or fine arts?

Dance should *not* be housed in the physical education department. It is one of the most highly expressive, as well as the oldest art in the history of mankind. It has served man historically as part of his religious and social experience, and today, has become the most popular and significant art worldwide for youth and mature audiences.

Do you feel that the best way that companies can be made financially solvent is to be subsidized by a university?

An affiliation of a dance company with a university is an ideal arrangement only if:



William Bales.

a.) The company is highly qualified artistically.
b.) If the company has imaginative vision about its collaboration and integration with the campus and the community.
c.) If the university sponsorship understands the costs of such a company and is willing to provide and/or secure sufficient funding for qualitative dance programs and other activities.
d.) Unquestionably new concepts of art/education interchange and collaboration have developed within the past ten years. Much of this has been due to programs and financing by the federal government and its endowment programs for the arts.

A recent study has highlighted the inflexibility of music departments (most departments in 1972 did not teach courses in jazz, blues, rock, etc.). Is dance in academe confronted with similar problems?

This is a controversial question for which there is no simple answer. The aesthetic parameters of an experience in the arts is normally the vision of one individual who defines his/her objectives in that art; who knows how much money he/she has to work with and what the breadth and focus of the curriculum must be. The director, dean, or chairman of the division and the faculty would ultimately establish the breadth and depth of the curriculum for the objectives desired.

A successful performing artist usually learns the limitations of his field, his energy and his

budget. Decisions are normally dictated by these considerations.

Should dance teachers be certified?

In my opinion they should *not* be certified for several basic reasons, as follows:

a.) Most "certification" requirements, I know, stress quantitative rather than qualitative achievement.

b.) Certification requirements in "academe," because of self interest and pedagogical insularity (established to protect university practices and "teacher training" programs), could shut out the most highly qualified candidates from within the university system or the professional field. The candidate who may be the best applicant for the position, but does not have the correct degree or any academic degree, would normally be eliminated. □

Christena Schlundt. Photo by Geoff Manasse.

Christena L. Schlundt
Professor and Chairperson, Program in Dance, University of California-Riverside.

What kind of dance education can/should universities provide?

Primarily, universities should provide a good college education. All students, even dancers, should have an opportunity to explore the myriad areas—in other arts, the sciences, the social sciences and the humanities—that a university offers. Breadth of experiences in thinking and feeling and moving should be the result of a university education.

This applies especially to the educated dancer who is an artist, if he or she wants to make worthwhile statements through his/her art. It also applies to the dancer who is a teacher, if she/he wishes to be the large human being his/her students deserve. And it applies to the dancer who, more often than not, after dancing through his or her youth, wishes or is forced to find alternative life goals. A broad university education has equipped him/her for such a development.

In the dance curriculum itself, as much emphasis should be placed on the history and theory of the art as on its technique, creativity, and performance. The first subjects give mental understandings while the second offer ways of knowing that are non-verbal. The two aspects are one in the individual student; only in the curriculum are they dichotomized. Both of these learning/experiences are essential to a university graduate in dance who speaks as a unified person through his/her dance.

Is there a philosophy of dance education today?

No, fortunately there is no one philosophy of dance education today in America. Dance education at the university level grew out of John Dewey and the waves he started, which were picked up by dancers at Teachers College, Columbia.

Should dance teachers be certified?

No. And I say this after a year in France in which I observed the stultification that obtains from such control. The chaos we have in America, which allows for charlatans but also for great creativity, is far preferable. □

Shirley Ririe
Co-Director, Ririe-Woodbury Company; Professor of Dance, University of Utah.

What kind of dance education can/should universities provide?

A well-rounded one, with the best possible experiences in performance, choreography, and teacher-training.

Is there a philosophy of dance education today?

There is extreme variation.

What is your personal philosophy of dance education?

We can and should train for excellence with very high standards in all the above areas, with room for specialization in these and other such areas as therapy, theory, analysis, etc.

Shirley Ririe conducting teacher workshop.

Should dance teachers be certified?

Yes. I feel we should expand our dance program in secondary education to the point where every state department of education certifies dance as a subject of instruction. Dance should eventually be moved to the status of a fine art and not be protected under the umbrellas of physical education, music, or theatre.

I also feel we should certify specialists in elementary dance education who can be resource and in-service assistants for classroom teachers. I am thoroughly convinced that dance should be an integral part of elementary education. It should be taught as a subject, and the role of movement as a tool for other subject areas should be understood. We need dance desperately, not as a fringe area but central to the curriculum. □

Mary Alice Brennan. Photo by Karin Denissen, 1968.

Mary Alice Brennan
Assistant Professor in Dance, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

What kind of dance education can/should universities provide?

Dance opportunities should be provided for any interested university student who wishes to participate in such experiences. A variety of types of classes should be offered but in particular those that develop the creative potential as well as the technical proficiency of the student. Where budget, faculty, etc., permit, major programs should be provided for those students who would prefer to pursue dance for professional careers (performing, choreography, teaching or therapy). Because of the opportunities for interdisciplinary cooperation with other arts and with movement sciences, dance has a unique opportunity to flourish in the collegiate community. This presumes, however, that dance receives support as an important art form.

The classes open to all students should stress the development of the creativity of the individual. In courses not directed toward specific styles such as ballet, folk, ethnic, jazz, etc. students should be guided toward finding the movement possibilities of their own individual structures rather than copying those demonstrated by the teacher. It is this objective that is most important for growth. In a society that has not provided opportunities for appreciation of the human body—its aesthetic qualities, its potential as an instrument of imagination and expression—it is necessary for persons to develop a self-directed and creative capacity for such expression. The building of technical skill is important but it is not necessary to possess a high degree of movement skill in order to express movement ideas. With competent teaching (still a rarity) beginners can simultaneously develop both technical and creative skills. It is herein, I believe, that dance has its educational value.

Is there a philosophy of dance education today?

No, I do not believe there is one accepted philosophy of dance education today, at least none that a majority of people would subscribe to. This is one of our problems as dance educators. We need to get together to find out what we believe and then to determine how we can best implement the best in programs, instruction, and materials. Some dance associations are attempting to do this. The National Dance Association of the AAHPER is in the process of developing position statements, philosophies and curriculum guides.

Should dance logically fall into physical education or fine arts?

Dance can logically find a place in either physical education or the arts since it has a strong affinity to each. Dance in education had its beginnings in and was nurtured by physical education. It shares a common interest in human movement and dance can benefit from the knowledge gained by physical educators in their study of movement. There is also some common methodology and values shared between movement education and dance education for children that should be promoted to provide quality experiences for all children. As an art form dance can, of course, fall easily into fine arts and can benefit from close relationships with other art forms. Whether dance should be in one or the other is not the question. In fact, that has been hashed for so long that it has side stepped the real issue which is: where can dance find the best environment for its own growth as a vital art-movement form? Dance needs freedom to develop and the budget support to allow this to happen. This could be provided by physical education, fine arts or perhaps as a separate department not connected to the other areas. Dance should take advantage of the fact that it has affiliation with both physical education and the arts and stop wasting time and effort asking this same question over and over again. When dancers in education come to some understanding of what and who they are then where they should be will answer itself.

A recent study has highlighted the inflexibility of music departments (most departments in 1972 did not teach courses in jazz, blues, rock, etc.). Is dance in academe confronted with similar problems?

It is possible that departments might become inflexible, although I think the lack of variety in programs has more to do with budget and lack of faculty with the necessary expertise.

Would artist-in-residence programs help to mitigate the dangers of insularity?

The artist-in-residence program is a good idea. We have been doing this for several years now and feel it brings in a freshness to the program. Each semester at Wisconsin we have a visiting dance artist who will teach some of the advanced technique, composition and repertory classes and, in general, the experience has been valuable.

Should dance teachers be certified?

I believe dance teachers should be certified with the hope that this would improve the quality of teaching and content. To attempt this poses great problems, however. Who should be the certifying agency, who sets up the criteria, etc? Also, it would only be one step toward upgrading dance education. The National Dance Association will be taking a position on this issue in the near future. □

Murray Louis, Henry Street Playhouse. Photo by Jack Mitchell.

Murray Louis
Dancer, choreographer;
Director, Murray Louis Dance Company.

What kind of dance education can/should universities provide?

There are three directions a dance training can pursue: a) professional performer (technical); b) pedagogical orientation (teaching); c) creative (choreography).

The ideal would be a successful balance of the three. The capacities of the artistic director of the department would determine this. Other determining factors would be the facilities and resources available: studios, theatre, cooperation of the powers-that-be, funds, orientation of the universiy in general, availability to a major city, etc.

Is there a philosophy of dance education today?

Every department has its own philosophy, which usually reflects the director of the department. But a teaching philosophy as such is meaningless unless the teacher has evolved a means to impart and reveal it to the students.

I believe everyone should have a philosophy for living, and if they are artists, a philosophy for their art. The two cannot function individually and isolated from each other. I attempt to encourage the dancer to practice his living ethics in his art and his art ethics in his living.

Should dance teachers be certified?

No, there should not be a certification for dance teachers. This may sound heartless, considering the damage a bad teacher can inflict upon an innocent body, but the extraordinary range of teachers—from ghastly to inspired—helps to effect the survival of the fittest. In this way mediocrity is separated from talent. A dancer who is destined to dance will find his way through any handicap and dance. His gift will enable him to survive initial bad training.

I am speaking here of artistry. Dance classes for poise, weight reduction, emotional release, therapy, etc. should be called something else, and be directed along other lines. □

Bella Lewitzky.

Bella Lewitzky
Director, Bella Lewitzky Dance Company;
formerly, Associate Dean, Theatre and Dance,
California Institute of the Arts.

Ms. Lewitzky provided a general statement as her contribution to the symposium.

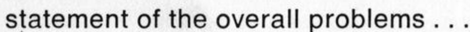
The very topic of the symposium, "Dance in Universities," gives credence to the changing and bettered stature of dance in our education system. It is at least receiving some form of recognition. There is a diversity of approaches to dance within the universities which spreads from its age-old home in the physical education department through attachment to one of the fine arts and in some rare cases, a separate school. The national attitude towards dance appears to be slowly shifting. Dance is gaining some popular support which is reflected in the high level of dance training available in the new phenomena of the schools of performing arts which now exist in many states. This level of technical training used to be possible only in private studios. There are even a few professional companies housed on campuses. These are dramatic changes, but at a national level they are the exception not the rule.

The issue is muddied by many conflicting currents. There are questions without clear answers. How does one define education? By a paper degree or by practice—by process or product—as a four-year term or a life long project—by the right to work or the right to discovery? Is there a crucial difference between an educator and a professional dancer? Probably—but I've found that what is under discussion is really good versus bad teaching. In the case of the educator there is often simply not enough knowledge of the field. In the case of the professional there may be a perpetuation of cruel and outmoded teaching methods. When I first placed one foot uneasily in the educational arena I had two ideas flung at me. One was that only educators treated the "whole child." I wondered how one could call oneself a teacher and teach only the toes. Some educators teach only a name on a roll sheet—a "head count." Some professionals do, indeed teach only the toes, but good teachers in both fields teach the whole subject to whole human beings. The second notion alerted me to the fact that the profession dealt in competitive terms incompatible with higher education. Let it be known that the level of competition in the hallowed halls of learning often puts the open and primitive competition of the profession to shame! Is college age too late for the study of dance? Should these be the prime years of performance? How does one cope with the history of the university vis-à-vis dance? There has been a tradition which graduates a teacher of dance to teach a subject which has not been practiced to undergraduates who in turn will graduate to teach a subject which has not been practiced to—etc. When this is carried to its most outrageous ends it results in "doctoral factories." What of the administrations' historical attitude toward dance? It is physical; therefore, it should compete with team sports and basketball funds. It is a service and should play handmaiden to theater and music where it must beg at the door for the use of the stage when theater or music are on a rare rest between productions. These theaters are often staffed by personnel directly hostile to dance. In an informal conversation with orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Ernest L. Washington, he cited one of his findings when the Office of H.E.W. sent him on a mission to the Soviet Union to find how that country treated dancers' injuries. When he asked the Soviet doctors what their preventive measures were, they responded "floors." This is a finding attested to by all dancers who have sustained ankle, knee, hip and back injuries because of non-resilient working surfaces. I would hate to sum up the total number of dance floors laid directly on concrete which I have experienced in universities. Within the educational system, dance has received inadequate recognition, facilities, faculty, and funds.

The new growth, visibility and popularity of dance has begun to change some of the old patterns. But I grow impatient with the lack of vision, with the lack of boldness of concept. Why shouldn't university dance be conceived in the same way as other subject areas within the system? A College of Architecture is structured to cover the field of architecture and they graduate architects. From the College of Music one should be able to graduate a musician. Why not a College of Dance within the university system equipped to cover the major components of dance? In a way, what institution would be better equipped than a university? Should a school of dance in a university gain parity in terms of recognition, both intellectual and financial, it would then be in a position to serve the university and the field very well. If I were to project my ideal it would go a little as follows: a school of dance centered upon dance as an art form. I believe dance to be profoundly significant as an experiential art form, to be learned in the act of doing—performing. From this base flow meaningful tributaries. From a training

base of strong and professional quality in the areas of performance, choreography, and history there should be the potential for creating performers, choreographers, notators, and dance scholars. Such a school should be able to certify teachers who would be able to move into special interest areas within the university such as physical education, dance therapy, drama, music, education, etc. In the process of dance production there would be the development of attendant dance professions such as light design, costume and set design, stage management, dance management, publicity, etc. There are a number of strong dance departments which have been moving in similar directions.

If dance as a performing art forms the core or root with all other branches leading from it, the field will be served from a powerful source. Should this order be reversed the branches will lack proper nourishment. □



statement of the overall problems . . .

by Barbara Weisberger
Executive Artistic Director, Pennsylvania Ballet.

Fund-raising is *not* my favorite subject, I'm afraid, and after thirteen years of the survival struggle, I must admit I feel very tired and a bit angry. A colleague recently showed me an article in Forbes Magazine which quoted Joan Ganz Cooney as saying, "I spend ninety percent of my time on survival issues. My largest function is to go out hat in hand to raise money to render a service to the public. It's ignominious and wrong." It sounds like something I have said many times.

Forgive the obviously petulant sentiments, but it is indicative of the depletion of spirit and energy which I think is rather common to those involved in funding for the arts.

In my more productive moments, I remind myself of certain salient points:

- One must remember that arts organizations and institutions are very young, still unformed administratively and constantly in a state of flux and repatterning. Immediate and critical problems have often prevented essential long-range planning.

- The American society still looks upon the arts as a non-essential and certainly low priority, i.e., "How can one give money to a ballet company when there are poor people?" An important thing to remember is that those of us seeking funds for the arts must realize that we are doing pioneer work, and a good part of our jobs is to attempt to change basic values.

- Patterns of philanthropy, especially on the governmental and many corporate and foundation levels, force a great amount of "grantsmanship," a time-consuming, usually expensive pastime. We are often required to create new areas of expenditure in order to fit into specified guidelines, rather than requesting assistance for priority, already-budgeted needs. It is essential that we attempt to convince funding sources that contributions to general operations are most helpful and finally most productive.

and a consideration of specifics . . .

by Virginia Tanner
Director, Children's Dance Theatre, University of Utah.

What are the chief funding needs of dance and how might they best be met?

Chief funding needs are for companies which are ready to perform nationally. Box office receipts can't meet the costs of today's salaries, travel, lodging and food for America's good to excellent companies.

notes on fund-raising for dance

What are the effects of lack of proper funding?

Companies stagnate, by only being seen in their locale; or they are unable to stay together.

Is the old struggle between ballet and modern dance evident when it comes to which gets more funding?

Yes, ballet continues to receive more funding. However, today there is an increasing trend to give funding to modern dance companies, as particularly exemplified by the Artists in the Schools Program, which jointly provides support monies from the National Endowment for the Arts and the various state arts councils for presentation of dance in the nation's schools.

What would you view as the ideal strategy for the funding of dance?

- The artist's dedication to the art form to the point of being able to produce high quality art work worhy of support. Don't try to ride someone else's bandwagon as an artist.

- Be energetic and enterprising yourself; don't sit back and expect to be totally sponsored. I have raised money in every conceivable way, including private donations, benefit concerts, fund raising by students, etc.

- Try to build your proposals to foundations around fresh and unique ideas. The half million dollars which we received to establish the Repertory Dance Theatre at the University of Utah was based on an idea that had never been tried before, that of bringing in notable choreographers to develop works that would be seen in the West. Through the Dance Theatre these and other works would be kept alive in a young, self-directed company.

- Have a vital organization (non-profit) working on your behalf—meeting the businessmen who have the capability to help, if they understand the need.

- As a resource for your supportive organization, prepare an attractive slide series that describes the importance of your effort and demonstrates the quality of your group. People must be educated to give to the arts; this implies that you should strive to give them a clear idea of your needs and objectives, and how their money is to be used.

- Strengthen your public relations effort by preparing a comprehensive press book, which would describe background, philosophy, experience, where performances have been given, accomplishments, etc. □

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