

# Dancemakers at the Cohn

by Edward Hansen

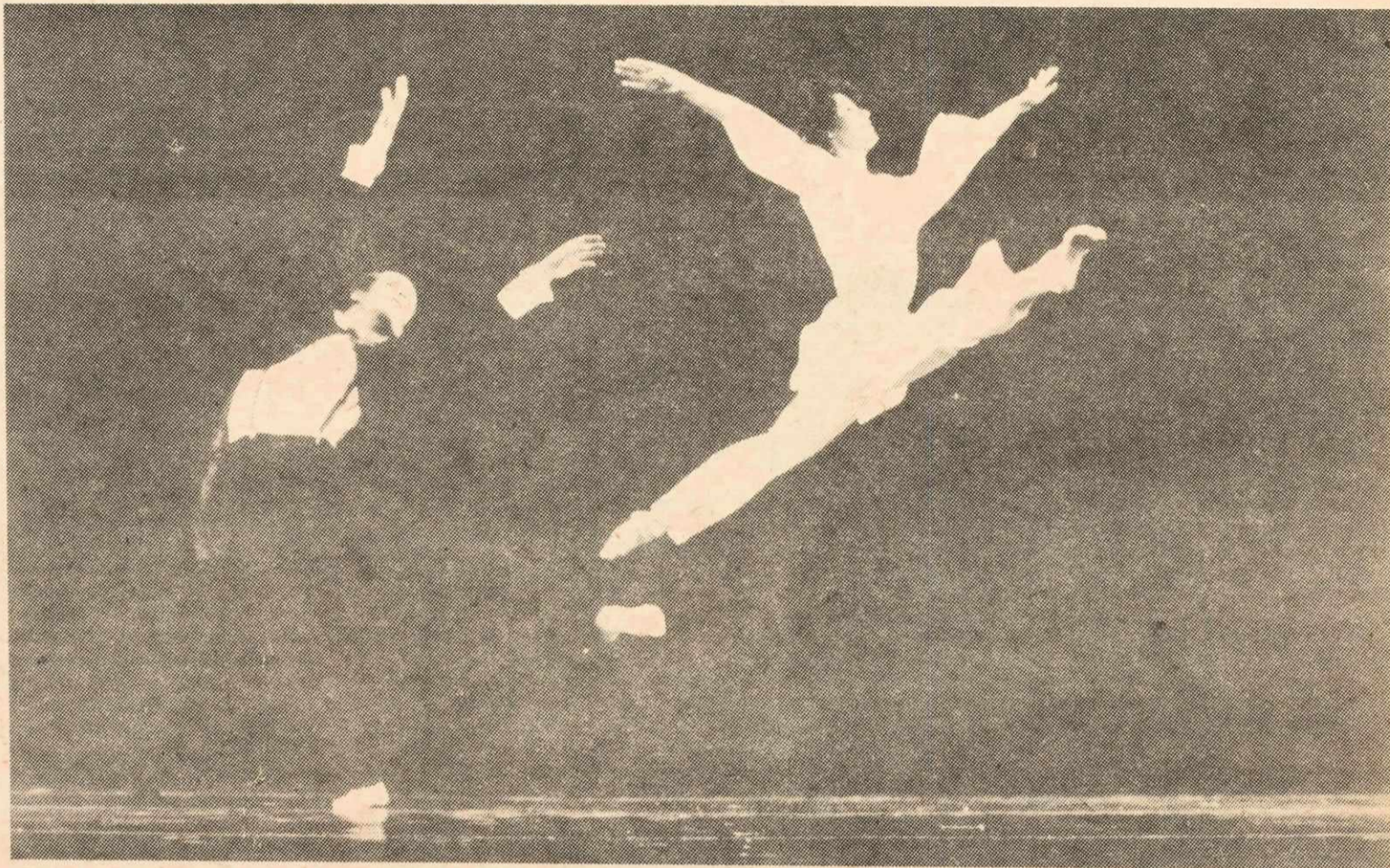
Halifax was treated to a highly professional repertory company performance recently at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium (*Dancemakers*, 12 Feb./83).

Founded in 1974, Dancemakers has grown to become one of Canada's foremost modern dance companies. Under the direction of Carol Anderson and Patricia Fraser, these exciting and versatile dancers perform works by distinguished international and Canadian choreographers.

Members of Dancemakers are representatives of a new approach to dance training that has emerged in response to the increasing cross-fertilization of ballet and modern dance. Whereas 20 years ago there was a great difference between the balletic and modern dance forms, nowadays the difference is often one more of emphasis than anything else. This is especially true in the case of Dancemakers, where all the dancers have had both ballet and modern training, and where what is prized most is a trained body capable of great interpretive flexibility.

In other words, the dancers are not locked into a particular training mode or technique and are able to draw on a large dance vocabulary. Thus, the repertoire contains works by choreographers coming from dance traditions as diverse as modern ballet, Martha Graham, Jose Limon, social dancing, Twyla Tharp, and Alwin Nikolais. An audience at a Dancemakers concert may see, in the same evening, ballet turns and jumps, modern dance 'falls', mimetic gestures, and social dance steps. Dancemakers has developed a style which combines all these elements, so that nothing looks out of place.

The artistic thrust of the com-



"Dancemakers" leapt for the sky, causing people's spirits to soar, and I don't know how to continue this metaphor...

pany has two separate but related aspects. First, it is to present the very best of the most current work being done in modern dance; and, second, it is to introduce the widest possible audience to the modern dance form in a way which will contribute to a more general understanding and appreciation of it.

The recent Cohn show both exemplified these aims and revealed the diversity in choreographic form that is possible with dancers of such

backgrounds. Five pieces were presented that night, to a surprisingly small audience of dance enthusiasts.


The first was entitled 'Aureole' (Chor.: Paul Taylor, 1962; Music: Handel). This choreography explored space and grace quasi-balletically, through series' of across-the-floor exercises that showed five dancers' strength in both body and technique. Repetitions of movement sequences that

rapidly cascaded from position to position were at times almost made awkward by very difficult transitions; the fancy footwork in triple time made this piece very exciting. As the dance developed, the repetitions 'widened' gradually, with additions of intricate patterns in unpredictable places in the movement sequences.

'Three Epitaphs' was presented next, another older work by Paul Taylor (1956; American Folk


Music); both of these opening pieces were 'reconstructed' by Eileen Cropley, to whom must go a great deal of appreciation for keeping these visions dynamic. This latter piece was extremely entertaining, the comedic atmosphere enhanced by the music, an old recording from the Bessie Smith era of honky tonk blues. Five spectres in grey would emerge periodically from the

continued to page 15




## YUKON JACK ATTACK #5.

### The Walrus Bite.



Temper 1/2 ounce  
Tequila with orange juice  
over ice. Fire in 1 ounce  
Yukon Jack to give the Walrus  
its bite. And you thought  
Walruses didn't have teeth,  
(tusk, tusk, tusk). Inspired  
in the wild, midst the dam-  
nably cold, this, the black  
sheep of Canadian liquors,  
is Yukon Jack.



## Yukon Jack

The Black Sheep of Canadian Liquors.  
Concocted with fine Canadian Whisky.

For more Yukon Jack recipes write: MORE YUKON JACK RECIPES, Box 2710, Postal Station "U", Toronto, Ontario M8Z 5P1.

# FINE

Arts

YORK UNIVERSITY  
TORONTO, CANADA

## SUMMER

NEW YORK • LONDON • PARIS  
• FLORENCE • ROME

*Unique study-travel programs offered for full university credit: New York studio • The arts of England • The arts of France • The art and architecture of Italy.*

*On campus in Toronto: Studio courses in Dance, Film, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts.*

## FALL GRADUATE STUDIES

Master of Fine Arts degrees in Dance, Film, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts.

*Includes: Film production, screenwriting, film studies • Ensemble training program in acting, directing, design, production/management, criticism/dramaturgy/play-writing • Studio art programs in design, painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, drawing, multidisciplinary art*

**For information on Fall undergraduate and graduate programs, and Summer courses, contact:**

Room 206BB, Faculty of Fine Arts, York University,  
4700 Keele Street, Downsview (Toronto), Ontario,  
Canada M3J 1P3 Telephone: (416) 667-3237