

ENTERTAINMENT

Dancers hop, but can't take off

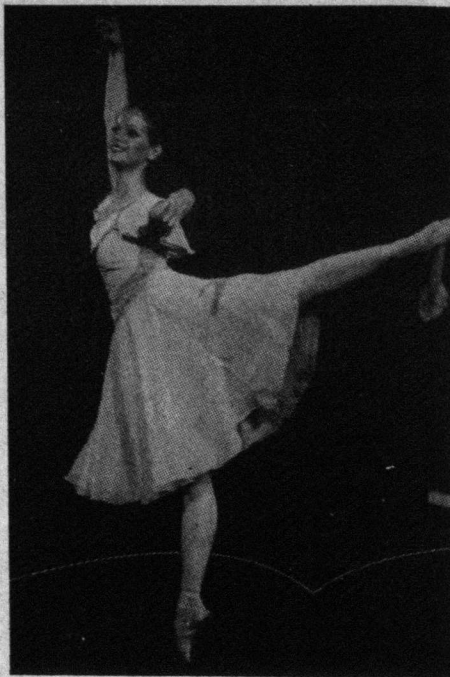
Ballet Eddy Toussaint
SU Theatre
Friday, January 25

review by Melanie Klimchuk

Friday evening, the award winning Ballet Eddy Toussaint de Montreal received a standing ovation for its only performance in Edmonton during this tour. Two of the dancers, Anik Bissonette and Louis Robitaille, recently won the gold medal for contemporary choreography at the International Dance Competition in Helsinki, Finland. The company was originally scheduled for three performances here, but the January 27 and 28 performances were cancelled due to a combination of insufficient promotion time, low ticket sales, and lack of funding. The dance company was hoping to, but did not receive a Canada Council Grant, and only allowed themselves three weeks promotion time before deciding to tour.

The evening was arranged in three sets of dances, with two intermissions. The first set was a performing arts masterpiece, expressive and powerfully arranged.

Briefly, "Alexis le Trotteur" portrays a turn of the century Quebecois who loves to dance. In the middle of a fete, his sudden descent into madness leaves him terribly alone. Then a woman appears, a promise of release from his lonely prison, but only



Anik Bissonette (above) and Louis Robitaille (below left) recently won a gold medal for contemporary choreography.

within the confines of his dream.

The first scene is a rousing, engaging traditional Quebecois fete. There is much movement and laughter and flirting. The audience, its emotions unchecked, is easily pulled into the scene.

And then, the audience is unexpectedly plunged into the agonized solo of the young madman. The others all ran away when he ripped his costume to tattered white shreds. The darkened stage becomes a spotlighted purgatory, with him in the center, writhing and dying alone.

Then others appear: phantoms in white who mock his aloneness with their passionate play. A lone woman appears, and the phantoms dissipate.

The pas de deux is erotic and lovely, full of beautiful contortions as two human shapes mold into one. But still they express pain and confinement.

The next dance, "Souvenance" (or "remembrance"), is a love triangle between two men and one woman. Their movements are fluid and passionate, switching by turns to stiffened and sullen when the abrupt entrance or exit of a third party dictates.

"Contates" is set to Bach's religious pieces. Only the male artists dance. They wear long, flowing white skirts. The dance is full of glassy-eyed, unsmiling grandeur. Their faces



are stony, or slightly pained as they carry one of their ranks on their shoulders. They look pompous and silly, and could remind one of some ancient patriarchal religious institution or other. For me, the dance lasted beyond the bounds of its natural life, but it was well received.

The last set, "Concerto En Movement," left me cold. It built up from a frozen-faced, stiff, frightened beginning to a livelier, but

skittery ending. I found it scattered and graceless. It was like watching small flightless birds hoping to fly if they can only work up the courage to throw themselves on a breeze.

However, the entire performance met with strong audience approval. The many curtain calls and the standing ovation proved that the audience was not disappointed, and with few exceptions, neither was I.

Rounding out the cube

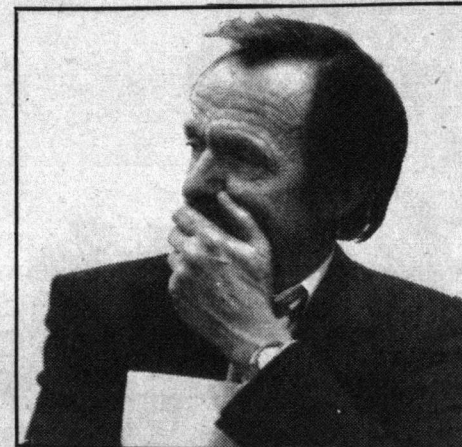
Cubism Revisited
The Edmonton Art Gallery
through March 17

review by David Jordan

Edmonton artist, Douglas Haynes, is the first to admit that "Cubism Revisited" is a misleading title for his current show at the EAG. "This is not cubism," he asserted flatly at the show's opening on Jan. 19.

The viewer who tries to draw a parallel between these impressionist canvasses and cubist works of the 1920's and 30's will only go away frustrated. The main body of Haynes' exhibit is dominated by a distinctly non-cubist them—ovals. These round perimeters to his paintings are not attempts to defy physics and "cube the circle," but are only Haynes' way of coming to grips with a problem faced by cubist painters, the empty spaces that tend to accumulate towards the edges of the canvas.

Haynes points out a progression in his work: his earlier paintings are impressionist color fields with just a suggestion of form—triangles, cylinders, and yes—cubes. As these forms took on more definition in later works, Haynes realized that he had taken that form of impressionism as far as he could, and began concentrating on the more sharply defined forms.



Douglas Haynes returns to "forbidden" cubism in his current exhibition.

"They always tell you in school to stay away from cubism. I just had to go back and find out for myself," the artist explains. One painting in particular shines above the rest: "This one here keeps me honest," he says, pointing to a dark canvas in the oval-cub theme entitled "The Beast."

Haynes sees no radical changes in his style in the immediate future. "I'll keep working on these until I've taken them as far as I can go," he says.

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