



## Bedazzled by ballet

BY MARK ANDERSON

with the precise order of the movement.

*Carmen* was very strongly sexual. It surely had a powerful influence on the crowd of Valentine's Day couples later on in the evening, as was probably intended. "*Carmen* is the only production I've ever danced in bare feet," said Barbara Moore, who played *Carmen*. "It allows me a freedom that's in keeping with the ballet — one that you wouldn't necessarily have if you were dancing in pointe shoes. It makes the ballet more earthy and real — more representative of the character of *Carmen* herself."

For me, this is also the only time I've ever heard strong rhythmic and percussive music (fast spanish classical guitar with castanets and other percussion) played for ballet. I liked this better than the pure classical ballet, but at the same time I liked that much more than I imagined I would.

Rave, rave...this show deserves it. All three pieces were very different from each other. This usage of ballet reminded me of painting — very thoughtful and structured design, but with a dynamic flow created within. The Alberta Ballet deserves a lot of credit for having the courage to push this medium, and for being able to make their experimentation pay off. I have the feeling that a hell of a lot of people that would not have expected to like this show, would have

During the show I noticed the phenomenon of women gasping when a particularly beautiful movement was made. I'm all for it. My companion and I wanted to cheer.

The Alberta Ballet held a performance of *Carmen*, and other works, at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium on Valentine's Day and I was there. A ballet? I thought, I'll force myself to watch one, once in my life.

I am not schooled in dance, but I went with someone who was, and the first piece — *Quest* by Crystal Pite — blew us both away. I have never seen any group of people exhibit such mastery over their bodies as this company did. Not only mastery, but mastery combined with design — in the placement of the dancers, in the lines they followed, and in the light that defined their space. One tableau in *Quest* (the divisions between tableaux were made through lighting) was of two men racing and fighting in achingly slow motion for a pointedly dropped handkerchief. Their two bodies were entangled as they fought to get forward, each forcing the other back. They traded setbacks (falls, rolls, punches, and head bashes against the knee) in a comedy that showcased such incredible rhythm and control it sometimes amazed the crowd too much for them to laugh. The creator of this piece (Pite) understood the timing of the laughter. She used it in *Quest* as comic relief from the shock of a dazzling move, leaving one visually and mentally manipulated, but in a pleasant way.

*Butterfly Dream* was the second piece and was more a classical ballet, beautifully choreographed and danced. The costumes consisted of abstractly painted body suits, contrasting for a balance

# Saint Nick of the net

BOOK

BEING DIGITAL

by Nicholas Negroponte  
Vintage Books

BY ANDY POTTER

Depending on who you listen to, Nicholas Negroponte is the Alvin Toffler of the InfoAge, the Marshall McLuhan of Multimedia, the Stephen Hawking of the Net. Let me throw another appellation into the pot: Saint Nick of the Bit. Negroponte says that every day will be Christmas Day when the bit — the basic unit of computer-speak — reigns supreme.

Professor Negroponte is the founding director of MIT's Media Lab and a regular of *CONTRAST* magazine. *Being Digital*, his first foray into the book world, is a discursive work which unfolds at a comfortable, conversational pace. Negroponte glorifies progress and the march of the "the machine," yet his thrust is humanistic. He's a techno-cheerleader who realizes that all the world is not (yet) a cyberstage.

Negroponte divides the world into atoms (the stuff of hard copy) and bits (the stuff of the future). *Being Digital* posits that "the change from atoms to bits is irrevocable and unstoppable." Bits commingle effortlessly (as in multimedia); the same story can appear as audio, video and/or text. Hence, the medium is no longer the message.

Negroponte suggests that "being digital will change the nature of mass media from a process of pushing bits at people to one of allowing people (or their computers) to pull at them." Bits can be personalized; the daily paper will soon become the "Daily Me" with a circulation of one.

Which begs the question: What about shared knowledge, a sense of community? Negroponte does not address such issues as cultural fragmentation and social Balkanization in *Being Digital*.

Moving bits is far simpler and more economical than moving atoms — it precludes the need for a physical distribution network. Negroponte waves goodbye to middlemen. He prophesies that a truly digital marketplace will arise when "the interface between people and their computers improves to the point where talking to your computer is as easy as talking to another human being." Not only will tomorrow's computers be able to talk to you, they will also look you in the eye, sense your moods, pour you a drink.

The future doesn't stop there.

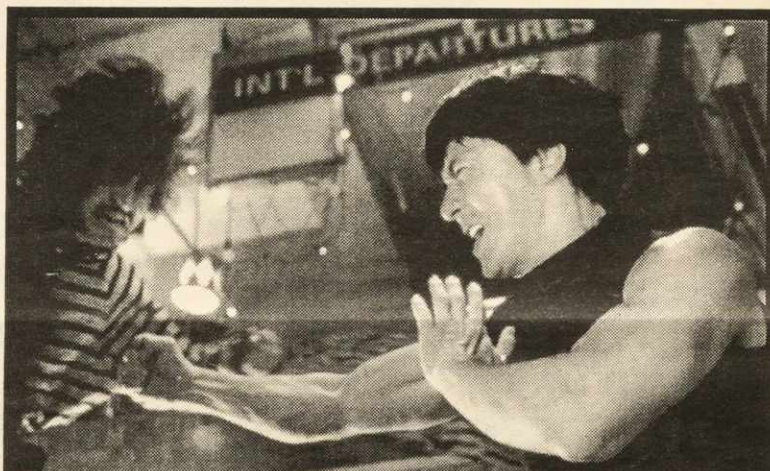
being  
digital

According to Negroponte, "breaking in a new personal computer will become more like house-training a puppy. You will be able to purchase personality modules that include the behaviour...of fictitious characters. You will be able to buy a Larry King personality for your newspaper interface. Kids might wish to surf the Net with Dr. Seuss." Now, I've got nothing against either Larry or the good Doctor, but I don't want to "interface" with a bevy of fictitious

characters. Sounds like spending an eternity at Disney World.

Negroponte heartily endorses the Net and the digital life to come. However, he realizes that, as Bob Dylan put it, "a hard rain gonna fall." Many people will feel disoriented, entire sectors of the economy will disappear.

What if you're a confirmed Luddite, fearful of inhabiting a jobless future? What if the thought of *Being Digital* terrifies you? Take comfort in this simple fact: people cannot eat bits.



## Hey Jackie, break a leg

FILM

Rumble in the Bronx

Starring Jackie Chan  
Directed by Stanley Tong

*Rumble in the Bronx* marks the second coming of Asian superstar Jackie Chan to the American market. In the early 1980's, Chan starred in an American production called *The Big Brawl*, which flopped miserably. Chan is back, but this time on his own terms.

Unlike American action heroes, who rely on stunt doubles and special effects to win our praise, Jackie Chan himself is the centrepiece of this movie. What you see is what you get. Chan is part Bruce Lee and part Charlie Chaplin. He tries to entertain the audience in every way imaginable with stunts and comedy. I have become an avid Hong Kong movie fan in the past year and I was excited to be able to see Chan on the big screen instead of on the bootleg, poorly subtitled videos that I am used to. So, I was eagerly anticipating the February 16 preview I attended at the Oxford theatre.

Let me start with the negatives. The movie had a thin plot, bad dialogue, and bad acting. The Caucasian actors representing the 'gang' that Chan was fighting looked like rejects from a West Side Story screen test.

But FORGET all of that!!

Watching *Rumble in the Bronx* was one of the best times I have ever had at a movie theatre. Laughter erupted in the theatre when the characters were speaking. The Cantonese dialogue was dubbed into English, so the lips did not match with the voices — very reminiscent of Bruce Lee movies. The crowd went wild every time Jackie pulled off one of his jaw-dropping stunts (he does all of his own stunts), or when he was beating up 12 people with his zany kung-fu antics. This movie is pure entertainment.

If you want to have a fun evening, and are willing to put your mind in cruise control, then go and see *Rumble in the Bronx*. I had a great time. And if you like this film, check out Chan's *Drunken Master 2* available at your local Chinese store. Watch for more releases on the big screen later this year, including *Thunderbolt* in which Chan plays a race car driver, *Police Story 4: First Strike*, and the North American release of *Drunken Master 2*.

SAMIR SIDDIQUI

## the truculent ten

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tc	lc	wo	cc	artist	title	label
1	21	2	◆	Eric's Trip*	Purple Blue	SubPop
2	23	2	◆	Moonsocket*	Moonsocket	Derivative
3	27	2		Bikini Kill	I Like Fucking/I Hate Danger	KillRockStars
4	-	NE		Various Artists	Outernational Meltdown	
5	1	4		Various Artists	Saturday Morning Cartoons...	MCA
6	3	5	◆	Eric's Trip*	The Road South	Sonic Unyon
7	4	5	◆	Four the Moment*	In My Soul	Atlantica
8	18	5		Guided by Voices	Tiger Bomb	Matador
9	2	5	◆	Download	Furnace	Cleopatra
10	-	NE		Noise Addict	Meet the Real You	Grand Royal

\*: Local Artist  
cc: Canadian Artist

re: Re-Entry  
lc: Last Chart

tc: This Chart  
ne: New Entry