

British choreographer visits York

Dancer trades awed status for challenge

By AGNES KRUCHIO

The soft-spoken urbane gentleman waiting patiently in the Excalibur office turned out to be no less than one of the pillars of ballet in Britain today. A guest of the department of dance, choreographer Norm Morrice spent three weeks with the students here, creating a new 25-minute dance for the end-of-term workshop to be presented by the students next week.

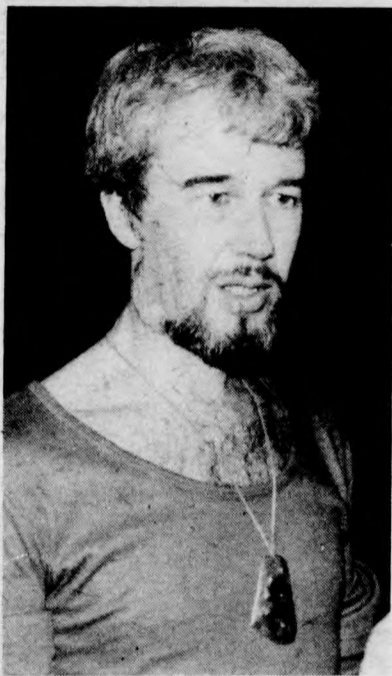
Artistic director of the Rambert Ballet in England for the past eight years, Morrice said he had decided to break away from the company for a year "to play and work around a little bit".

"For years I have been turning down invitations to visit other companies because I did not have the time," he said in his clear precise English.

"I was truly beginning to feel like an establishment figure, and with all its consequences — the authority, awe and worship with which they surround you, everyone always patting you on the head for doing such a good job."

The Rambert Ballet is one of the oldest dance companies in Britain. With some 40 years of experience and many famous students behind it (Audrey Hepburn and Vanessa Redgrave among them), the Rambert Ballet is today the alternate "establishment" company to the Royal Ballet.

Many of Rambert's students went on to found dance companies elsewhere and distinguish



Choreographer Norm Morrice themselves as choreographers. Celia Franca, founder of Canada's National Ballet, had early associations with the Rambert in the '30s.

Morrice described some of the problems of working with an established company like the Rambert.

"One of the biggest problems is to fight off creeping paralysis," he said. "Once you've had a success, people want to have it repeated again and again."

"We did a children's show, for example, called Bertram Battle's (an anagram of Rambert Ballet) Sideshow. It was enormously successful with the kids, and we did it for two years. The company loved it too, but Bertram began to take possession of the company. He had to be killed off almost ritually for us to be free to do other things."

Morrice himself was a ripe 19 when he had his first dance lesson — he had been studying science until then, and planned to become an engineer.

A Ford Foundation prize enabled him to study in America; he proceeded to fuse ballet with Martha Graham's modern dance techniques.

Morrice joined the Rambert Ballet some 23 years ago, first as a principal dancer; after seven years he became a choreographer, and eight years ago

the aging Mme Rambert, now 86, entrusted him with the management of her company.

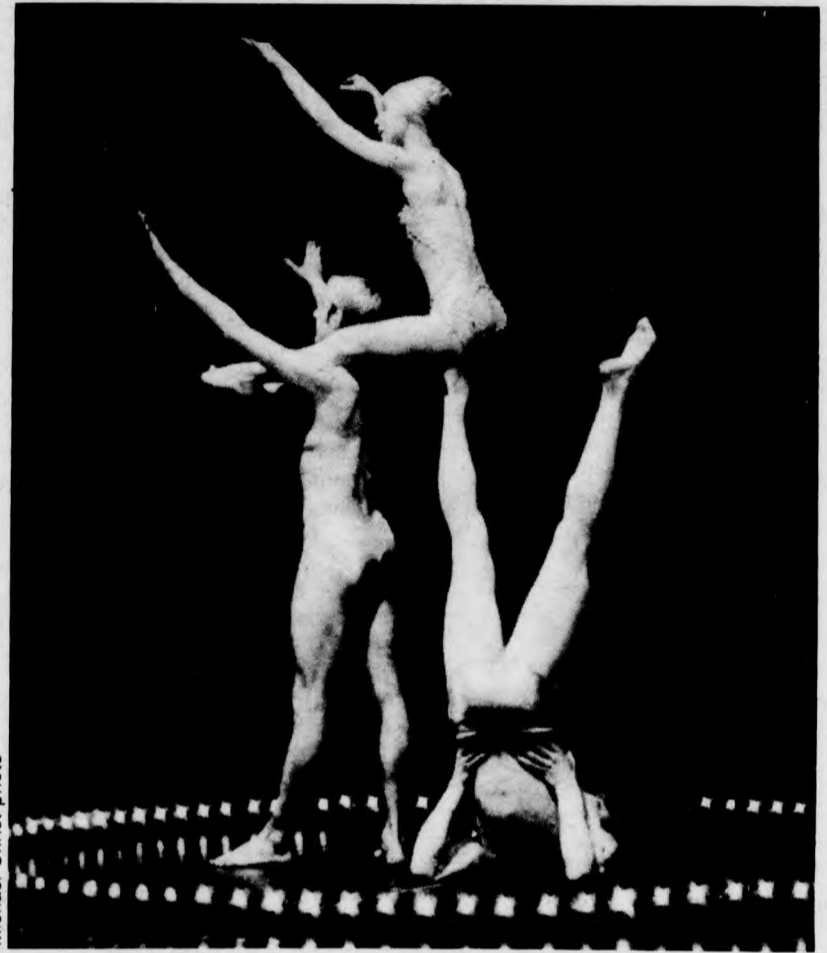
"One of the reasons I wanted to come here (to York)," he explained, "is that I have always wanted to do this, and the universities in Britain have nothing like the dance department here."

He said he was "very excited" about working with the students.

"It really allows one to break old habits, to be suddenly confronted with a group whose members are all on different levels of development."

His next job will be in Cologne, Germany, starting immediately, where he will work with the Opera Company. From there he hopes to go back to his native Mexico for a year.

The dance he choreographed for the troupe of dance students here is entitled Where Now, and will have two casts of 12 students each. The casts will perform alternately during the workshop presentation held next Monday through to Wednesday nightly in Burton Auditorium at 8 p.m. Admission is free.



The Murray Louis Company in Burton Auditorium.

More sports

Yeowomen's time runs out

By MARG POSTE

Time was a problem which plagued the hockey Yeowomen last Wednesday night when they lost a hotly contested match to McMaster 6-5.

With 37 seconds left in the game, the Yeowomen trailed 6-4. They put on the pressure for an unassisted goal by Judy Goodhead, but the buzzer sounded to end the York comeback attempt.

The Yeowomen startled McMaster by scoring the opening goal of the game at the 6:30 mark of the first period on a Goodhead shot. McMaster had previously crushed York by a score of 7-1.

McMaster scored two goals in the first 10 minutes of the second period to pull ahead 2-1. Ambrose scored the tying goal while Baird notched the go-ahead goal for McMaster. Both McMaster goals were scored from scrambles in front of the York

net. York tied the game at 2-2 on Goodhead's second goal of the game.

McMaster scored a third goal when Coveny let a blistering shot from the point find the target past York goalie Ann Dembinski. Lois Cole, McMaster's top scorer made the score 4-2 45 seconds into the third period; two minutes later, Goodhead passed out to Cathy Brown, who fired the puck home making the score 4-3.

Finally, Goodhead scored her third goal of the evening which tied the score at 4-4. The tie was short-lived, however, as McMaster scored two quick goals making the score 6-4. Goodhead's last-minute goal was her fourth of the game.

The game itself was rough. Despite a non-body contact rule, bodies were flying as each team tried to outmuscle the other.

The team plays its next game in 1975, January 16, against the Toronto Baby Blues.

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Murray Louis and troupe emphasize 'body' in dance

By MICHAEL CHRIST

The spectacle of stage-struck clowns, nimble slack-wire artists, balancing trios, magicians, and a truly death-defying worm-taming act; all were the creative fantasies of Murray Louis and his company of six attractive dancers who performed his circus ballet, Hopla; just one of three acts which delighted the appreciative audience at Burton this past Monday night.

The Murray Louis Company offers a muscularly kinetic style of modern dance, which ignores the necessity of meaning as they share with us their

particular sense of physical humour in their expression of the sheer joy of dance.

Those who remember Murray Louis as the principal dancer with Alvin Nikolais' company will note how Louis expresses, with his own company, his individual style which stresses the "body", while Nikolais tends to submerge "body" in his dramatic use of stage design and electronic music. Nikolais, in fact, created the lighting and part of the score for this production.

In proximities, the first set, the company was featured in a colorful dance based primarily on contacts and confrontations, as patterns were passed from one dancer to another. Personae, the next set, depended on the interpretation of an improvised musical score performed by the Free Life Communication, a New York modern jazz group. Here the company experimented in the use of the body in performing a series of abstract human landscapes.

Those who missed this stirring performance still have a chance to get tickets to the Laura Dean and Dance Company, January 16, the next production in the Performing Arts Series.

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