

Cohn on its toes

by Marion Frazer

From Wednesday, Sept. 29, to Saturday, Oct. 2, Canada's National Ballet Company will be at the Rebecca Cohn with an intriguing bill of fare for the delectation of Halifax audiences. Each night, a different program of four selections allows the viewer to sample something of the diversity of modern ballet as well as a classical favourite.

The National Ballet will be presenting three of its own productions during this tour, more than have previously been shown at once by the company. These Canadian ballets, new both to Halifax audiences and to the company itself have received excellent critical reviews earlier this year. On the program for Saturday night is "Monument for a Dead Boy" by Rudi Van Dantzig, from the repertoire of the Dutch National Ballet. It has generated a considerable amount of controversy due to the inclusion of what may be interpreted as homosexual encounters, among them a possible stylized rape scene.

James Kudelka, a member of the ballet company, (and choreographer of "A Party", one of the Canadian productions mentioned earlier) in



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an interview with the **Dalhousie Gazette** discussed the current tour of the National Ballet and the varying sophistication of Canadian audiences. The visit to Halifax is part of a Canadian tour, Kudelka said that Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg audiences are probably the most critically mature in regard to ballet. Not having been to Halifax before, he felt that he couldn't comment on its comparative appreciation of his art.

The entire company (62 dancers) are in Halifax this week for the production at the Cohn, although not all will be performing. The Ballet is on the road much of the year, and since they often tour abroad at the request of the Canada Council, has become virtually a team of Canadian ambassadors.

Members of the National Ballet received some exposure to Maritime hospitality Monday when they were taken for a ride on Bluenose II. In keeping with Maritime tradition, it poured and the drenched dancers were arrayed in varying shades of green (garbage bags). Nonetheless,

all thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Ballet companies, Kudelka maintained, are constantly dependant upon outside funding. Even if all performances sold-out, the National Ballet would still be in the red due to high overhead costs. Its present tour was feasible only with financial assistance from Canada Council and IBM Canada Limited.

It has often been said that Canadian audiences "sit on their hands". Kudelka authoritatively argued that dancers (even the best dancers) perform much better when they are receiving feedback from their audiences in the form of applause. It is notable that New York audiences, who are probably the most culturally aware in North America are also the noisiest, says Kudelka. Perhaps more timid Halifax fans might bear in mind, when they "go to the ballet" this week, the fact that feedback initiates response.

Further information regarding tickets and performances may be obtained from the Dalhousie Arts Centre Box Office 424-2298.

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