

Sarah's Touch Coming to SUB

interview by Rachel Sanders

"I'm trying to be chipper," said Sarah McLachlan sounding cheerful but slightly dazed. "I had a gig last night, so I was up till four." Despite feeling tired and probably a little fragile, the 20 year old Halifax-born singer and songwriter was able to talk enthusiastically about her flourishing music career. She also supplied me with details about her upcoming tour with The Grapes of Wrath, and she even managed to remain quite chipper the whole time.

McLachlan's first album, *Touch*, was released late last year and includes a delicate mixture of ethereal guitar and keyboard melodies along with evocative lyrics. Especially worthy of notice on her album are "Vox" (the first single to be released), the instrumental "Uphill Battle," and "Ben's Song," which is about the death of a handicapped child with whom she worked for over six months. She is amazed at the success of her current album, adding that "it's really nice, especially to become quite popular within Canada before anywhere else. Most Canadian artists have to go to the States or Europe to be recognized."

The recognition McLachlan has achieved up to now can surely be attributed in part to her many years of musical training. This training included guitar lessons from the age of seven or eight, piano lessons from age eleven and five years of voice lessons. In 1985, she toured with a band called October Game, was discovered by a record company, and began her current solo career. When she moved to Vancouver in 1987, she spent 9 months writing, on and off, and produced the material for *Touch*. The many artists who

first influenced her music "include Mary O'Hara — not Mary Margaret O'Hara — Simon and Garfunkel, Cat Stevens and Joan Baez. "Later on," she says, "I got really involved in classical music, and I played a lot of it for many years." Most recently, she has been influenced by Peter Gabriel who she declares is her mentor — "I tell this to everybody in every interview, someday maybe he'll read one and then he'll finally know!"

High points of McLachlan's career so far are mostly the gigs she's done, especially those in Montreal and Quebec City: "The crowds there are so excitable, you can get them going really easily." She mentions specifically a concert she played a couple of months ago in Quebec City, "it was an outdoor concert, which I really loved, and there were 11,000 people there, it was one of the biggest crowds I've ever played."

One of Sarah's recent achievements is her success at the west coast music awards which was "another shocker." She won best songwriter of the year and also best album graphics for her collaboration with Greg Sykes on the cover of *Touch*. The latter award she found surprising, since "the album graphics are really very basic."

Her return to Edmonton follows three previous shows here — once "months and months ago" at the Sidetrack Cafe, a gig in Dinwoodie for CJSR's 5th birthday celebration, and most recently at this year's highly successful Edmonton Folk Festival. "It was great," she said "like every folk festival, they're always great. You meet all these fascinating people from all over the world."

She said, however, that she regretted missing much of the Festival because her drummer and her manager got married that weekend (to each other!). She hopes to make up for it at next year's Festival however, saying "hopefully they'll give me another chance."

When I asked her about her coming tour, she began digging around in her manager's desk for her tour dates, complaining that "it's not telling me anything, it's a big mess!" Eventually, though, she found what she was looking for and told me that her tour, a double billing with the Grapes of Wrath, starts on September 30 here in Myer Horowitz Theatre and will continue on all across Canada. Since the tour has not actually started yet, she could only tell me her great expectations: "I love touring, I love playing, and the Grapes are really nice guys, so I think it'll be a lot of fun."

She'll be spending a few months after the tour writing material for her new album which she says will be released hopefully sometime in April. "I'll do my best!" she laughed, and added that she'll have to "go crazy for about a month and just write, write, write!" She feels relieved to have her first album finished and says it's given her a real focus — one that she didn't have before the completion of *Touch*. "Yes, I want to do music, this is what I want to do." She doesn't have any real plans or expectations for the future, except that whatever happens, it will involve her music. "All I really care about is making music, and hopefully people will like it. They liked it the first time, so I'm hoping that if I can please myself, I can please other people as well."



Sarah McLachlan

Anderson's Jewel Touring Western Canada

interview by Boris Zvonkovic

"Many people here don't realize what a jewel we have... there should be a pride in Canada that Canadians have been able to produce a ballet company that is world class,

a beautiful calling card for our country." This is the sentiment voiced by Reid Anderson, the new artistic director of Canada's largest professional ballet company, The National Ballet of Canada. The 39 year old Anderson,

who is the first ever Canadian born director of the company, assumed his new position on July 1st of this year and has definite plans to maintain and expand the international prominence that the company has already gained.

Anderson brings to the National Ballet a long and distinguished career in the world of dance, both on stage and off. At the age of seventeen Anderson received a full scholarship to the Royal Ballet School in London, and from there went on to a seventeen year career as principal dancer of the West German Stuttgart Ballet. He has performed as guest artist with such internationally renowned companies as The Royal Swedish Ballet, the London Festival Ballet, the Hamburg Opera Ballet, the Prague State Opera, and The National Ballet of Canada. Off stage he has been a ballet teacher, coach, producer, choreographer and most recently, artistic director of Ballet British Columbia.

Anderson has successfully made the transition from world class dancer to dance administrator and is now anxious to take on the difficult task of directing one of Canada's pre-eminent ballet companies. "I find it just as fulfilling teaching and directing dancers as dancing itself... When I started on July 1st it was not a daunting, harrowing thing at all. I have worked on and off with the National Ballet for the last five or six years, I know most of the dancers and most of them know me. It was more a homecoming for me than going to something completely new."

Anderson explains that the present season for the National Ballet was planned before he assumed the position of director, however he does have definite plans for the future of the company. Firstly, he plans to re-emphasize the company's classical base by stressing the classical dancing style and perhaps revising some of the classical ballets in the National's repertoire; "over the period of the next two years I have to see what we need to do with what we already have... I want to get the best classical performance we can on stage."

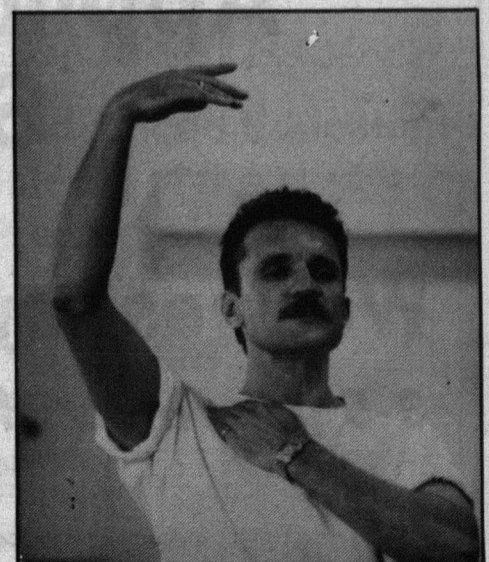
Secondly, because some of the National's famous and more experienced dancers, such as Veronica Tennant and Frank Augustine, will soon be retiring, Anderson wants to work with the young talent in the company. "I have to make and give opportunities to the ballet stars of tomorrow... this has to be done now."

Finally, Anderson would like to continue the process started by the previous co-artistic directors, Lynn Wallis and Valerie Wilder, of establishing a unique choreographic image for the company. "We need ballets that other companies don't have... I have to find choreographers, preferably Canadians, and give them the chance to design unique ballets for us... This is our ticket to get around

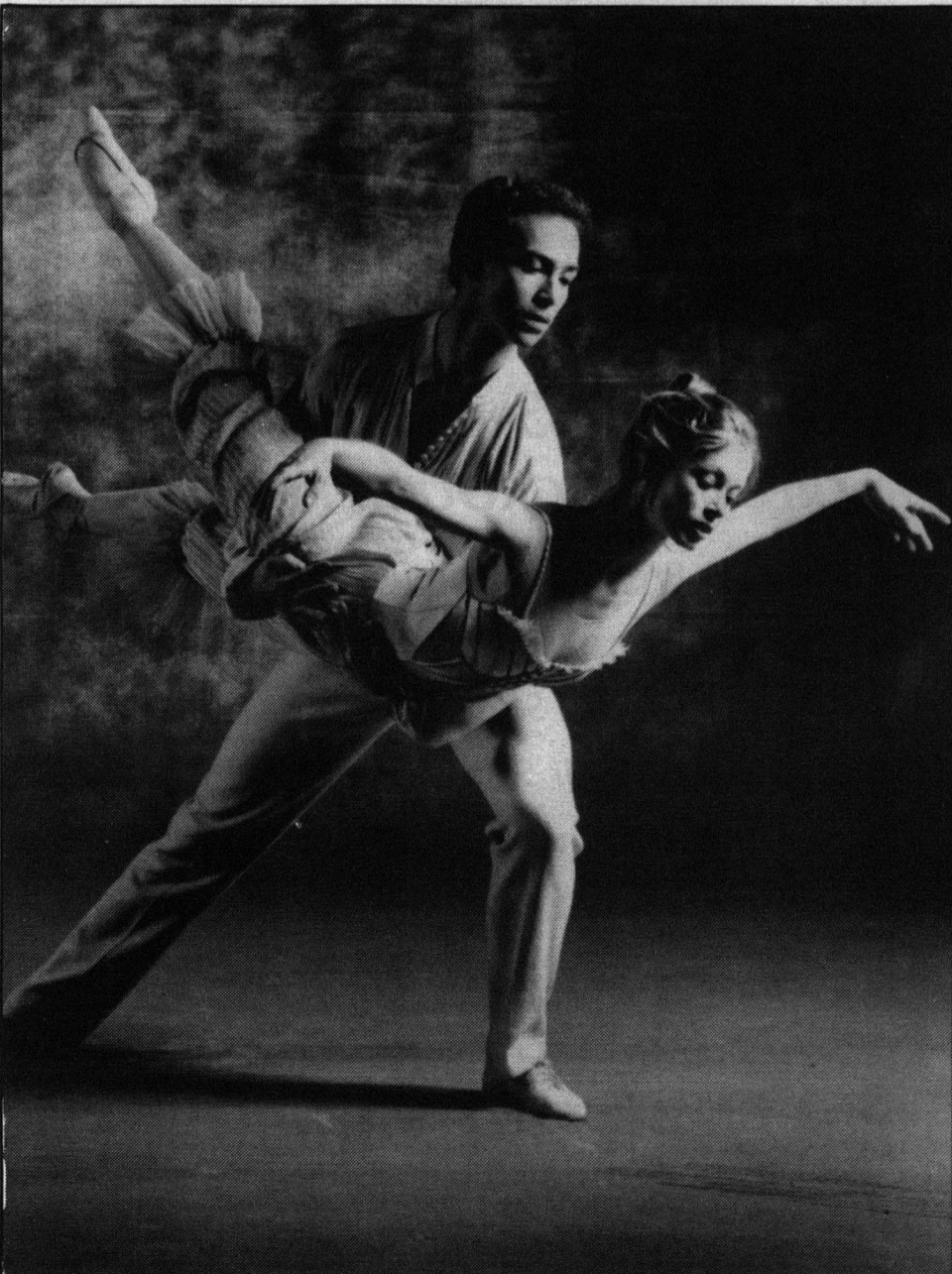
"...a ballet company that is world class..."

the world. However, because we are the "national ballet" we also have to continue to reflect what is going on in the world of dance today... We have to bring the good things to Canada and have our dancers perform them."

During its present three week Western Canadian Tour, the National will perform three ballets: *La Bayadere* (Act II), *La Ronde*, and *Napoli* (Act III). As Anderson explains, "these are all big ballets. One will really see the company in a full range of what its dancers can do and the different styles that they can bring to a role."



NBC's artistic director, Alex Reid



Kim Lighthouse and Owen Mantague appear in the National Ballet Company's production of *La Ronde* October 4 and 5 at the Jub.