

While ballet has been a late-comer among the arts, it has made astonishing progress and has become one of the pre-eminent arts in Canada. The country is at present supporting three main ballet companies -- the National Ballet of Canada, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. In 1950, after a short period as a semi-professional group, the Winnipeg Ballet was able to become fully professional, and in 1952 its name was changed to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. The National Ballet Company was formed in 1951 by a group of interested Toronto citizens, called the National Ballet Guild. In 1957, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens was founded in Montreal. The National Ballet was given the honour of performing at the opening of Canada's National Arts Centre in Ottawa, and was the only classical dance company invited to perform at Expo 70 in Osaka, Japan. To celebrate its twentieth anniversary season, the National Ballet Company recently made its first professional tour of Europe.

Although contemporary dance is a typical North American form of expression, it has taken root slowly in Canada, and then, it is interesting to note, only in cities that also have a major ballet company. However, Canadian dance is now beginning to show signs of the development of its own tradition.

Education for the Arts

Training for the theatre takes place in workshops and theatre schools, mainly those affiliated with community theatres. Attention to the theatre has also spread to the universities. Courses in departments of drama, as well as in English departments with theatre facilities, such as laboratories, are teaching not only the theory and literature of the theatre but also its techniques. The late 1960s were marked by a deepening commitment on the part of the universities to professional theatre.

The most important school in the country is the National Theatre School, which was established in Montreal in 1960. Its creation was the culmination of eight years of dedicated effort by theatre-lovers, amateur and professional alike, who shared the dream of a truly professional theatre in Canada. The purpose of the school is "to prepare actors, designers and technicians for the theatre". The programs of study are intensive, arduous, challenging and creative. The promise of the school to its students is not to produce competent artists but rather to provide them with a concrete basis on which they may build their art. The school makes use of the most talented members of the theatrical profession as faculty members and consultants.

The National Theatre School is a "co-lingual" institution, with the French-speaking and English-speaking students being trained in separate but similar programs. When the subject matter requires it, both groups combine for classes. By meeting and working together, the students can become familiar with each other's traditions. It is hoped that, in time, this can result in an approach to theatre that is unique, and distinctly Canadian. The school is in close contact with the growing number of theatrical organizations across Canada and, through its graduates, effectively strengthens such organizations. This infusion of strength makes it possible for more Canadian theatres to be established, in which traditional as well as contemporary and