

# Royal Winnipeg Ballet coming to Halifax

by Janice Fiander

This year, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. The Winnipeg Ballet Club was founded by Gweneth Lloyd and Betty Farrally, who came to Canada from England in 1938. In 1949, the Club became the first professional ballet company in Canada. The company has had the reputation of performing contemporary ballets of many internationally known choreographers such as Agnes de Mille, Brian MacDonald, and Norbert Vesak. In 1980, Vesak won a Gold Medal for Choreography at the International Ballet Competitions in Varna, Bulgaria, for his ballet *Belong Pas de Deux*. The ballet was performed by principal dancers Evelyn Hart and the late David Peregrine. Hart won a Gold Medal and received the Certificate for the Highest Artistic Achievements, and Peregrine won a Bronze Medal. In 1970, the company became the first in Canada to include a "rock ballet" in their repertoire. In the past ten years, with rapid technical development and with the maturation of Hart, the company's principal dancer, they have been able to add

to their repertoire such full-length ballets as *Romeo and Juliet* with music by Prokofiev and *Swan Lake* with music by Tchaikovsky.

This year, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet brings to Halifax one of its most exciting programs. It is most appropriate that in this anniversary year, they should tour with two ballets choreographed by the late George Balanchine. Balanchine came to America in 1933, and through collaboration with philanthropist Lincoln Kirstein formed a ballet society which evolved into the New York City Ballet. He is one of the most renowned choreographers in the world. Balanchine's Russian heritage gave him the tools to develop a unique style founded on musicality and incomparable technique. His *Concerto Barocco*, to be performed in Halifax, had its world premiere in 1941. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet premiere was in 1988. *Concerto Barocco*, danced with Bach's *Double Violin Concerto in D Minor*, is truly a celebration of dance. Having no plot, its subject matter is the music. This abstract ballet is one of the best examples of Balanchine's work, demonstrating the speed

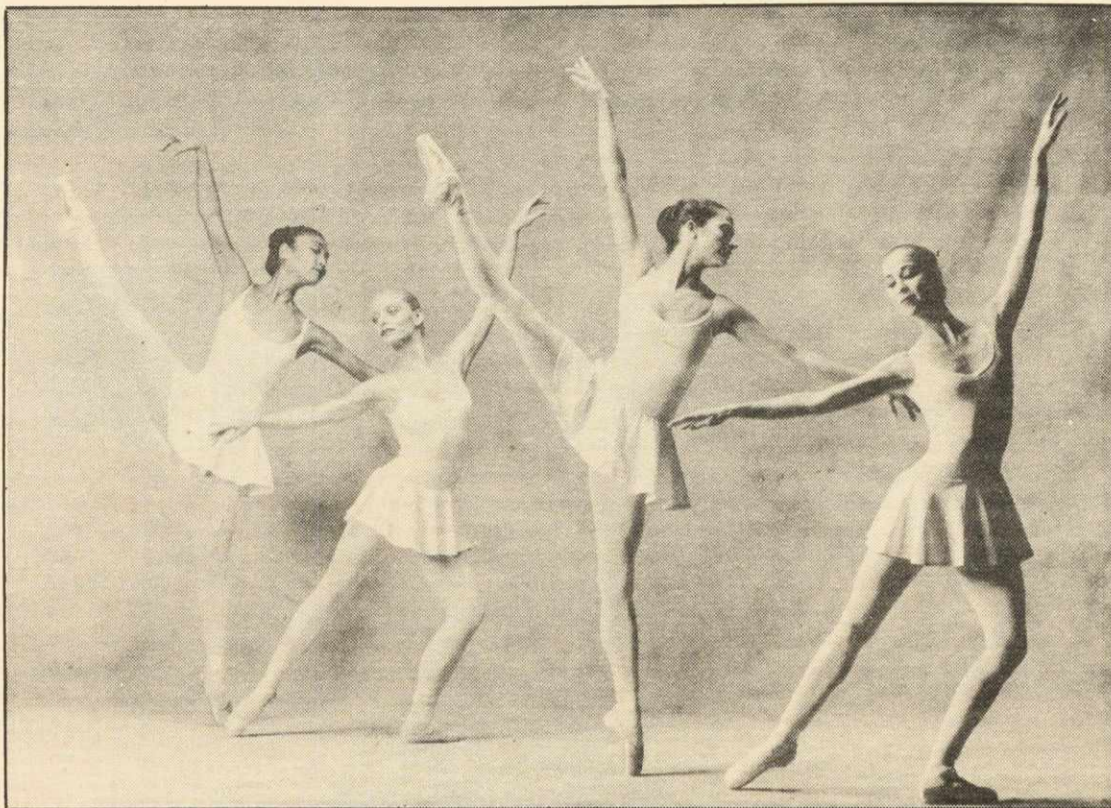


photo credit: David Cooper

**Concerto Barocco. Choreographer: George Balanchine.**

and precision of his unique schooling.

The second Balanchine ballet is vibrant pas de deux entitled *Tarantella*, based on the Italian folk dance tradition, with music by the American composed Gottschalk. Both Balanchine ballets have been staged by Susan Hendl, who was a dancer and is currently an Assistant Ballet Mistress of the New York City Ballet.

*Anne of Green Gables* — The Ballet received its world premiere on October 11, 1989. It was created specifically for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's 50th anniversary. Choreographed by Jaques Lemay, a teacher and choreographer of the company and school, its music is composed by

Norman Campbell, who also composed the musical *Anne of Green Gables*, performed annually at the Charlottetown Festival.

This is not the only ballet which will be new to Halifax audiences. *Sequoia*, choreographed by RWB soloist Mark Godden, was performed for the first time at the Banff Festival of the Arts, July, 1989. It is a contemporary piece danced with music by the American composer Joan Tower. The costumes have been designed by Paul Daigle, former dancer of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Halifax Ballet Theatre. Daigle also assisted Godden in creating the set.

On this 50th anniversary year,

the company has suffered the loss of two of its artists and one of its founders, Betty Farrally. David Peregrine and artistic director Henny Jurriens died tragically earlier this year. Following Jurriens' death, Andre Lewis was appointed Interim Artistic Director. Lewis has danced with the company since 1979 and became a soloist in 1982.

The company dances in Halifax at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium in the Dalhousie Arts Centre on October 31st and November 1st and 2nd at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are available at the Arts Centre Box Office. Student tickets are \$19. The box office information number is 424-2646 and the Charge-it line is 424-3820.

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## Beautiful but boring

by Irfan Mian

*Shellyan Orphan* — Century Flower

Caroline Crawley and Jemaur Tayle from Britain are Shellyan Orphan. Their new second album features a double bass, violins, violas, flute, percussion, saxophones, oboe, cor anglais drums, cellos, accordion and french horn. There are 17 musi-

cians to play them, along with vocals, piano and a bit of guitar by the two band members. But the music is not as beautiful and orchestral as one would expect.

The first song, "Shatter," starts the album with enjoyable, happy and poppy violin and three of the following songs are very beautiful, but the other six are nothing exceptional.

Shellyan Orphan resembles

This Mortal Coil's "Song to the Siren" (especially "Self") and sometimes reminds one of Everything But The Girl. The resemblance to the jazzy latter is one of their flaws.

The title track, having an abundance of strings and oboe, is one of the very nice tracks, as is the instrumental "Amanita Muscaria." "A Few Small Hours" with Jemaur Tayle singing along with the main vocalist, Caroline Crawley, sounds especially beautiful.

Shellyan Orphan does not cross the line into desecration of orchestral instruments in order to churn out money. Indeed, some of the music is beautiful. But Caroline Crawley does not have an extravagantly beautiful voice (beautiful to some degree, yes), so even though some of this album is a great pleasure to listen to, it is not a must.

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