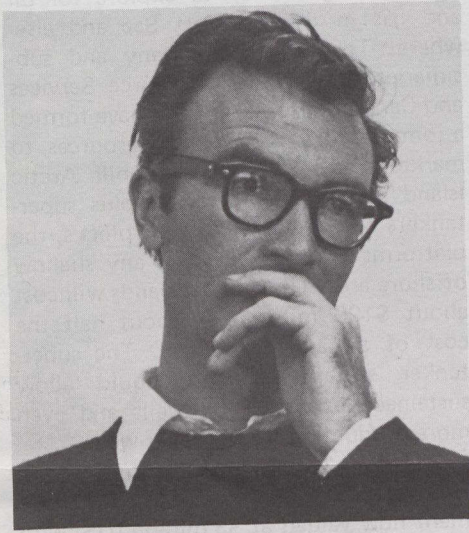


# News of the arts

## Norman McLaren makes movie magic again — but says farewell



Canadian filmmaker Norman McLaren.

Canadian filmmaker Norman McLaren whose latest film *Narcissus* has won acclaim at both the Montreal and Toronto film festivals held last month, says this will be his last film. The news comes as a shock to many, since no other Canadian filmmaker has remotely approached his record of achievement over so long a span of years. The recently-previewed film is his fifty-ninth and one of the most significant in his long career with the National Film Board.

It was as far back as 1941 that Norman McLaren, the native Scot, answered John Grierson's call to join the newly-founded National Film Board. And it is as an employee of the Board that he has remained to give us his valedictory on the filmmaker's art.

Mr. McLaren's use of dance as the central theme of *Narcissus* is not the first time he has drawn on this art form.

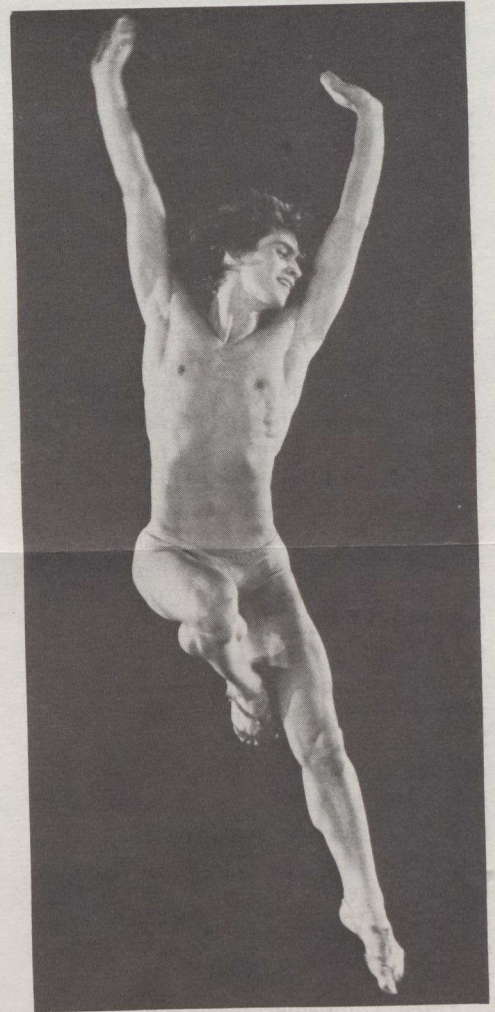
Back in 1967, the Oscar-winning director of *Neighbours* put Margaret Mercier and Vincent Warren before the cameras in *Pas de deux*, photographing them as they danced Ludmilla Chiriaeff's steps in slow motion and extending their movements cinematically with multiple exposure techniques.

Five years later, in *Ballet Adagio*, he again applied slow-motion photography to dance, this time filming Anna Marie and David Holmes, using the camera to analyze the mechanics as well as the aesthetics of classical ballet.

### Leading innovator

Both films collected many awards (16 in the case of *Pas de deux*) and identified Mr. McLaren as a leading innovator in examining one art form in terms of another.

In *Narcissus* he carries his innovations even further by using blurred time expo-



Jean-Louis Morin dances the title role of *Narcissus*.

sure photography — a familiar device in still work but rare in motion pictures — to enhance a portrait of self-absorption.

The film is based on the Greek myth of a naive youth, who falls in love with his own image. It stars dancers Jean-Louis Morin of the Martha Graham Company, Sylvie Kinal of the Cleveland Ballet and Sylvain Lafortune of Les Grands Ballets canadiens. Fernand Nault of Les Grands Ballets canadiens was the choreographer.

### Skip framing

The painstaking techniques involved in this movie magic, the skip framing, freeze framing, reverse action printing all help explain, along with Mr. McLaren's declining health, why a 22-minute film has taken more than three years for its director to complete.

But the results are magical. Mr. McLaren shows ways of looking at movement that could never be experienced in the live theatre. *Narcissus* stands as an open challenge to choreographers to respond to the resources he exploits.



Jean-Louis Morin and Sylvie Kinal in scene from dance film *Narcissus*.