

# Canada's National Ballet:

## More Swift and Elegant than Ever

**Happiness is a ballet company that has come into its own.... The National Ballet of Canada is that company.**

— Anna Kisselgoff, *The New York Times*, July 1988

As Canada's National Ballet approaches its 40th birthday, it is moving more swiftly and more elegantly than ever.

Like the obscure, small-town birthplace of a sports celebrity, Canada's largest dance company once seemed content to be the home of Karen Kain, Frank Augustyn and Veronica Tennant. It was a more-than-respectable image for an organization founded in 1951 in a country without a long-established ballet tradition. But it was not enough to convince audiences and critics abroad to take the dance troupe seriously as a whole.

The situation improved after Danish-born Erik Bruhn became artistic director in 1983. Among other things, Bruhn promoted the National's young talents — helping to consolidate the troupe's reputation as a showcase for a number of excellent dancers. Last year, *New York Times* critic Anna Kisselgoff described the 68-member company as “no longer awakening but awakened.” This comes as no surprise for, today, the company has some of the best and brightest talents that any ballet troupe could hope to offer.

Gizella Witkowsky in *Don Quixote*: a company that is “no longer awakening but awakened.”



Barry Gray