

# LIVING

**A**LMOST a century ago, the American dancer Loie Fuller took Paris by storm with her debut at the Folies-Bergeres, the City of Light's celebrated cabaret for plumed showgirls and extravagant entertainment. A one-time chorus girl from Chicago, Fuller did not so much entertain as entrance, appearing in a shroud of veils and electric shadows that inspired her French nickname, "La Loie." Indeed, Fuller's sensual style eclipsed existing dance categories of classical and cabaret, and her historic performance unwittingly introduced audiences to a new law of on-stage movement.

Whether settling permanently or passing through to perform, these innovators invariably influenced the development of French modern dance. Key figures further reciprocated France's investment. In 1978, Alwin Nikolais was named director of the first Centre National de Danse Contemporaine in Angers, where he was succeeded by Viola Farber. Carolyn Carlson, a former member of Nikolais's company, established residency in 1968 in Paris, where the opera appointed her to head a foreign dance ensemble. Now well into a brilliant expatriate career, Carlson is considered one of her adopted country's own.

With these models, the idea that lyricism was accountable to classicism began collapsing in France, where dancers were suddenly free to pursue their own ideas. This process began formally in the 1960s, as the French dance world — its audience as well as its actors — acknowledged modernism at the hands of expatriate exponents. By the 1980s, a core of French choreographers had claimed autonomy in the art form, emerging onto the dance floor with a native iconography that occasionally made reference to, but never replicated, Americans. Among them, Jean-Claude Gallotta paid homage to Cunningham with his 1981 dance, "Ulysses." But Gallotta's gestures were already more raw and visceral than the calculated symmetry of Cunningham's, and his work, like the autodidactic aesthetic of Francois Verret or Sidonie Rochon, meant that French dance had crossed a symbolic bridge — no longer simply influenced

## A Tale of Two Countries

by Ginger Danto

by American dance, the French were fully reinterpreting it. The gestation of French modern dance was complete, and its birth initiated a boom that has not abated to this day, thanks to an increasingly enthusiastic audience willing to travel to the many places throughout



Michel Hallet



Angelin Preljocaj

France where dance is happening. Indeed a brief decade ago, such French cities as Montpellier, La Rochelle or Grenoble were known more for their scenery or culinary specialties than for specific cultural offerings. The arts had historically been anchored in Paris, with its highly social performance season, even through the rampart city of Avignon lured music and dance fans to its summer festival and Orange lent its ancient amphithe-

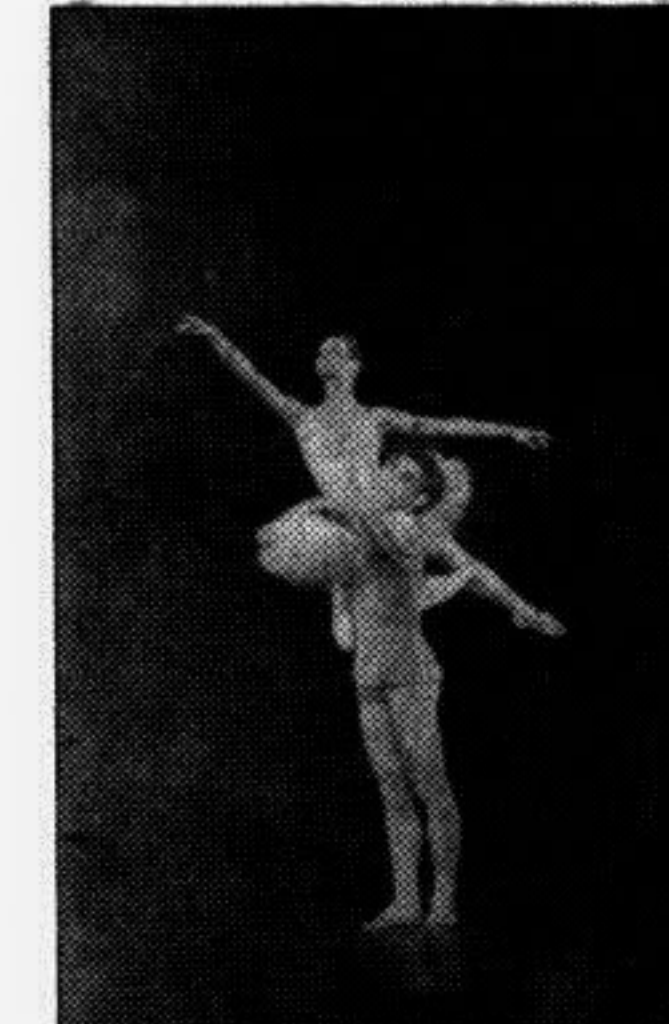
aters to grand-scale opera. Today, President Mitterrand's plan to decentralize culture from the capital has come to fruition, and France's system of government-sponsored arts has spawned dance centers and residencies for choreographers throughout the country.

The resulting eclecticism of French modern dance is as diverse as the country's geography, from the cloudy plains of Normandy, where Karine Saporta directs the National Choreography Center of Caen, to the Mediterranean cityscape of Marseille, a sprawling port where native Michel Kelemenis brought his company, Plaisir d'Offrir. Yet there is more than geographical distance between Saporta's dramatic storytelling and Kelemenis's exuberant expression of dance as an elaborate game verging sometimes on vaudeville. Ultimately, what links these compatriots to the group of leading French choreographers is a sense of exploration.

The overall pattern of French modern dance today is a cross-hatching of myriad paths, from that of abstract avant-garde led by Odile Duboc and Daniel Larrieu to the sensually ritualistic venue of Claude Brumachon or Angelin Preljocaj, the son of Albanian refugees who escaped to France.

In deference to France's cultural legacy, many native or resident foreign choreographers variously incorporate theater and its inventory of expression in dialogue, slapstick, even derision. Josef Nadj, who arrived in France in 1980 and is now associated with the Choreography Center in Orleans, brings to his work martial arts, mime and art history from his native Hungary. Theater of the absurd, however, may best qualify Mathilde Monnier's highly inventive choreography. Still others borrow from different legacies: Catherine Diverres draws inspiration from the spectral Japanese dance genre known as Buto; Dominique Bagouet all but redefines baroque; music and mysticism are the signature

ingredients in works by Marcia Barcellos and Karl Biscuit of the Compagnie Castafiore; and Regine Chopinot, 1991 winner of the Grand Prix International de la Danse, has used the contexts of fashion, chess and boxing matches in pieces echoing the real in recreated



Paris Opera Ballet



Castafiore

worlds. Experimentation is not just the purview of contemporary companies, however. The long-established Lyon Opera Ballet has built a unique repertoire around the cutting-edge work of young international — including American — choreographers, thus helping to bring the French-American dance link full circle. Moreover, the company's 1985 production of Prokofiev's "Cinderella" as a futuristic fairy tale further proved that old and new

could work together. But such ground-breaking events in dance have become a tradition in Lyon, which early on claimed its current status as France's "City of Dance." With the establishment of France's first Maison de la Danse and subsequent launch of a dance biennial, the ancient silk-making center has become the nation's leading site for attracting known and newly emerging artists. In 1990, the biennial dedicated its season to "A Century of American Dance," and featured 60 US companies as well as selected French troupes whose works for the occasion variously addressed this theme.

In March, the Kennedy Center will reciprocate Lyon's gesture with a largescale dance festival. Until now, US dance audiences have seen but piecemeal evidence of the French dance boom via select company tours. The Kennedy Center's timely showcase promises to illustrate, through a panorama of classical and contemporary troupes, the vibrant state of French dance today.

Appropriately anchoring the festival is the Paris Opera Ballet, representing a 260-year-old tradition of French classical dance. France may have been a latecomer to contemporary dance, but its claim to classicism dates back to the time of King Louis XIV, who elevated dance from entertainment to art form and set up schools for training the newly anointed artists. An 18th-century ballet master at the Ecole de Danse de l'Opera liberated the troupe from the opera, allowing dancers alone to create dramatic narrative. There was no want of drama in such early triumphs as "La Fille Mal Gardee" (1786), nor room for more romance in "La Sylphide" (1832) or "Giselle" (1841). In time the world's top dance talent gravitated toward the company, from the first ballerina on point (Marie Taglioni) to legendary choreographers from Balanchine to Bejart.

In different ways, all these artists attest to a spirit of reciprocity still fervent after nearly a century. As such, the Kennedy Center festival chronicles not just France's coming of age in an art form, but the continuation of a tale of two countries committed to dance.

Courtesy: France Magazine

## Tuinder Travels

by Nico den Tuinder



**E**AGER for a short trip? Tired of all those city tours dragging you from one museum to the other? NTT has the ideal short visit trip: to exotic Bangladesh. Dream of the deltas. Get to know all of it in just four hours.

The international airport will be our destination. After leaving the plane giant queues in front of the passport control will be waiting for you. The boots are understaffed; at the same time you will see a lot of loafers.

The conveyor belts will be the next attraction. The bags of your plane are likely to be distributed over two conveyor belts at the same time. You may put some valuable items in your bags for extra excitement: you cannot watch both belts at the same time, and thieves may steal your luggage. Or take some bags that can easily be cut open by officials. If waiting takes too long, try changing both travellers' cheques and cash at one of the banks in the hall. The employees will only be willing to change the latter. They cannot fiddle with cheques.

Then we will leave the building, for the crowd experience. You may draw up in

phalanxes and use the trolleys as spears, like the old Romans did.

You may spend one hour as you wish. Suggestions? Act as an innocent, inexperienced traveller: you will get ripped off by one of the taxi drivers. None of their taxis is metered. Take a short drive with one of them, for a taste of the local traffic game.

An old-time favorite is spending some time in the arrival hall. When you are tired, you can take a seat in the cafe. You can really relax in the tough chairs. You may try to distract the waiter from the television, or get the television's noise down. If you wish so, your children can play the game "Count the Deficiencies in the Arrival Hall." They may earn points by counting the number of broken tubelights, crawling cockroaches, waste papers, dirty toilets, announcements for the departure hall, and the number of people who have to keep standing in the absence of a proper number of chairs. Nota bene: the privilege of spending some time in the arrival hall will cost you twenty Taka.

At eleven o'clock sharp you must report at the gate of the departure hall. You will

be packed up. No intimacy, no time, hurry! The first passenger to reach the passport control will get a small prize. An indication of the hurdles: opening of two queues by the airline officials, and not managing the clients in the old order, or misinforming the passengers (the official may say that your flight is delayed, while actually another one is).

After these thrills you will be able to relax in airport restaurant. CNN with its diarrhoea of news will be blaring out of several TVs.

You will then proceed to the waiting room. With a little bit of luck, your flight will indeed be delayed. The announcement will probably be made right at the scheduled time of your departure. The officials will allow you to move freely in and out of the waiting room again, without checking him.

This will be the end of your tour. We are sure you will enjoy each part of it.

The international airport, Miniature Bangladesh.

The experience:  
Inefficiency  
Theft  
Crowds  
Recklessness  
Indifference

**V**ISITING the bachelor of a young university student, appearing for his SSC examination, one came across a bold DMC street warning placard, yards wide and high with scabrous letterings being used as a clothes peg without any qualms.

When questioned about the strange existence of the grotesque road sign the young hash smoker, with intellectual pretensions, explained that his student group had once got "high" on vodka and whisky. In the delinquent fling, riding rows of motor cycles, they had just walked off coolly with the atrocious and "loud" piece of the Dhaka Municipality item saying "Warning, Work in Progress". The student has been keeping the piece of paraphernalia since then as a curio item, to flaunt before his friends and acquaintances to show how unconventional his "jet setting group" was.

Another young man boasted recently of how his set of friends had once coolly walked off with four dozen soft-drink bottles from the cafe of a local cinema without being questioned or stopped by anyone. "And later we made a neat profit on the sale of the bottles. This was 10 years ago when we were just out of school, and did we enjoy the lark in that summer holiday?" was the blissful ego-centric self-appraisal.

A third college student spoke in ecstatic terms of how he and his handful of fun loving friends had once walked off with bits and pieces of furniture ranging from carved and inlaid tables to cane chairs and chest of drawers from an expensive hotel. "We told anyone who cared to question us that we were taking them for repairs," the young man explained with bombast over the feat of blatant daylight robbery of a place open to the public.

### NO MONETARY GAIN

Taking away decorative and expensive mugs, saucers, plates, sets of spoons and forks from relatively expensive cafes which later to the upper middle class and serve snakes in the waiting cars parked alongside the wayside

## Kleptomania Rampant?

by Fayza Haq

eating place, is again a very common phenomenon among the youth. They gain little—relatively—in monetary terms and should feel guilty using these articles in their own homes, with braggadocio yet it would not be surprising if the cup from which you are having your tea or the plate from which you are tomorrow helping yourself to the chicken or egg curry, happens to be a lifted item from the many restaurants.

There is such a brisk trade at the various places of entertainment that perhaps the authorities cannot keep a tab on missing half a dozen mugs or a couple of small tables. Similarly, the owners of the cinema houses or restaurants must apparently be indifferent millions to be indifferent to the loss of articles like crockery and cutlery, that the educated youth have no quiet complex about walking off with.

As for removing passages of important texts from the foreign libraries for public use, and tearing attractive coloured illustrations for getting more marks at tutorials or tests, there in an old cus-

tom of this brand of highway robbery among students this ranges from the school to the university stage "scholar" is inclination. Fines are supposed to be imposed and the books are to be checked, and double-checked, but the stock of books and their contents appear to diminish over the years. Yet no one can point the accusing finger at any particular person.

### TEEN-AGERS' DELIGHT

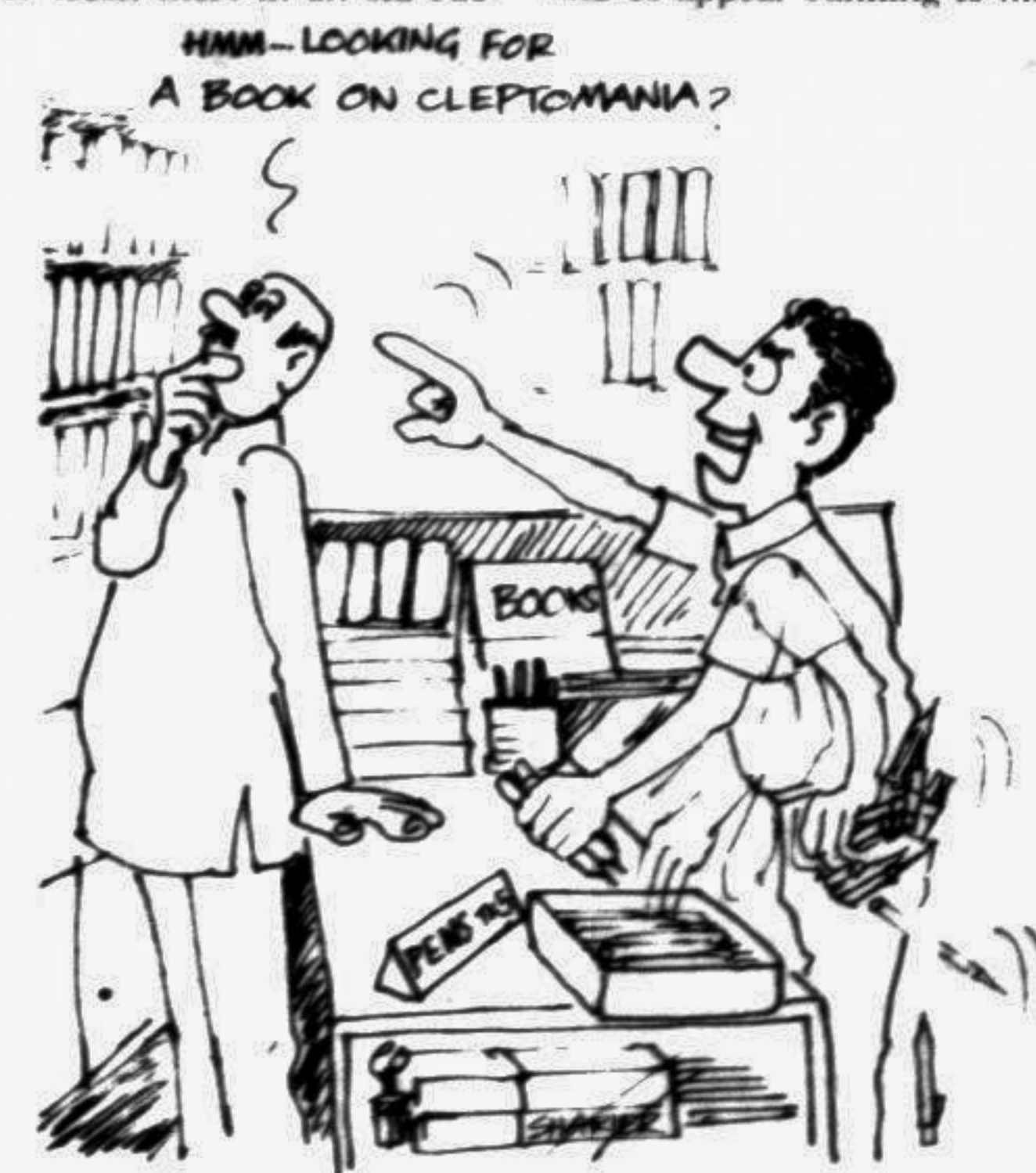
Helping oneself to the forbidden fruit and flowers from the parks are the delight of the teenagers and even the younger set. The little ones in shorts, going to public schools, where their parents do not have to spend so much and where there is no question of chauffeur driven cars to look out for reports at home — these rowdy and reckless young thing fling stones at mangoes, guavas, papayas and such fruit — even when they are unripe. One is sure that the child is not exactly starving but is indulging in the unsavoury frivolity merely to pass time and be wilful, and so appear cunning to his

companions.

As for the flowers that are so gallantly presented by the co-eds to the doe-eyed girl of their dream — how many of them are ever suspected to be literally picked off from the campus branches or the neighbours houses while the romantic one pours out quatrains of courtly poetry in praise of his lady love?

Again, the beauty-conscious and fashion-aware youth visits the beauty salons from time to time. College girls have the pretext that their originally straight curls may go out of shape by the evening, when the scheduled party is to be held. So, coolly they walk off with curlers and pins, avoiding their return, with one lame excuse after another. This matter is reported to stretch on for months with no qualms of conscience.

One is not naive to believe that the students of an earlier generation were a set of angels who knew little besides studying and indulging in approved extra-curricular activities. Yet the present day batch of students take to rampant kleptomania, like "hogs to slop" and in the same disgusting fashion. Surely the over-thirteen has more self-esteem and sense of proportion! Onlooking parents and guardians too could do their bit to discourage the wild flings of their young ones.



Soft and simple (left)



Daring and dark (right)

Courtesy: Elle

## Handy Tips for Rainy Season

by Farhana Ahmad

the clothes to make them smell fresh and fragrant. Another thing to do to make clothes smell good is to put the empty wrappers of fragrant soaps in the cupboard with the clothes.

2. A typical picture of monsoon is a lot of wet clothes and the housewife sitting with a forlorn expression on her face trying to figure out what to do with them. You have the clothes dry inside due to incessant rain. So what you can do is place some old newspaper on the floor and put the clothes to dry on top of them. Newsprint has great absorbing capacity and the wet

clothes will soon become dry.

3. One common problem of the rainy season is small insects on the book shelf. The best thing to do for this is to spray insecticide on the shelf once a week. Or you can put naphthalene between the books.

4. Water colours become damp in the rainy season. It paintings become damp then what you can do is take the painting out of the frame and hang it to dry with the opposite side facing the sun. You have to be very careful that the painted side is not exposed to the rays of the sun, otherwise the painting will

fade.

5. Another major problem of this time is that there is fungus on the leather goods.

Take out the infrequently used leather goods sometimes and wipe them with a dry cloth and put shoe polish over them. That way there is a lesser chance of them catching fungus.

6. Rainy season brings out worms and caterpillars and their likes out of the drains. If there is stagnant water on the roads, there is greater chance of these coming out. That is why there is a great need to put either flynl or bleaching powder at the opening of these drains on a

daily basis or at least two to three times a week.

7. To rid yourself from disturbance of flies you can wipe the floors specially the kitchen floor, with flynl or kerosene oil mixed with water. This lessens the attack of flies.

8. Dirt collects a lot more on the heads of tapere-corders during the rainy season. So the head needs to be cleaned frequently.

9. Biscuits and chana-chur lose their crispiness easily during the monsoon. Heat them in the frying pan to make them crispy again.

10. Salt dissolves in the rainy season. Keep a blotting paper at the bottom of the container holding the salt to keep it from dissolving.