

Phantom Limbs

CONCERT DANCE IN NEW ZEALAND FROM THE 1930s TO THE 1980s



IN 1978, one year into its existence, Limbs Dance Company performed at Victoria University in Wellington. In her review in the student magazine *Salient*, the veteran dance innovator Rona Bailey expressed the hope that Limbs' accessibility and relevance meant concert dance had at last 'arrived' in New Zealand culture: 'We were seeing a new and fresh approach to Modern Dance. This was dance for all people, not just an elite. Modern Dance in New Zealand has not yet set down real roots. It has not reflected the real life, work and heritage in this country. Limbs have all the ingredients for doing just that.'¹

But what about earlier manifestations of concert dance in New Zealand? This article traces the development of 'modern' or 'concert' dance in this country and explains how this art form, stemming from German expressionism and American modernism, connected New Zealand to a global artistic and cultural fraternity. Peter Gibbons's injunction that New Zealand historians should acknowledge 'the world's place in New Zealand' as well as 'New Zealand's place in the world' is apposite.² Including dance in our picture of the emerging cultural diversity of mid-to-late twentieth-century New Zealand highlights 'the convergences of experience in these parts of the world with experiences of peoples in other parts of the world' and challenges notions of twentieth-century New Zealand identity.³ Historical modern concert dance in New Zealand sits comfortably within a global community of this art form while, at the same time, reflecting domestic cultural and political developments. Dance in the twentieth century, as with other modern art forms, broke away from pure representation and moved towards abstract interpretation and social and cultural comment. The moving, expressive bodies of New Zealand dancers suggest new ways to understand the national and the local as well as the global and the international.

Choreographing dance and movement into history is problematic. 'Words', as William H. McNeill, the prominent US-based historian of Western civilization, has stated, 'do not capture the visceral emotions aroused by keeping together in time. People have always danced but seldom wrote about it.'⁴ The elevation of the intellectual, the written and the visual over the physical and the performed has long been a hindrance to the inclusion of dance, theatre and music in academic discussions of the development of New Zealand culture.⁵ Specifically, it is rare for the performing arts to be included in the story of what Keith Sinclair labelled 'becoming New Zealand'.⁶ Our cultural and social history has tended to focus on the development of nationalism in the literature and visual art of the twentieth century. Frame, Curnow, Baxter, Angus,

McCahon; these are some of the names that are heard when New Zealanders speak of their artistic and cultural heritage. Seldom do we hear of Smithells, Gnatt, Dunlop or Casserley.⁷ Music and dance, notably waiata and haka, have occasionally been included in histories because of their accumulating signification as national symbols, especially when they are put into service for a sporting event or in a display of nationalism. In a nation that prides itself on its physicality and physical fitness, dance is notably absent from histories of corporeal expression. As Caroline Daley commented in *Leisure & Pleasure*, in New Zealand's historiography it is rare to find a discussion of the moving body that is not aligned with sports.⁸ Yet if, for instance, one was to compare an inspired dash on a rugby field to a darting leap on stage, the differences might not be great. Indeed, Jock Phillips conjured this comparison when, blocked from seeing a try-winning 'cross-kick' leap, he wrote, 'Because I had not seen it, I felt free to imagine it. In my mind I saw speed and grace. Essentially I saw ballet and art.'⁹

Like modernist painters, 'modern dancers created new ways for people to see themselves'.¹⁰ By recovering forgotten dancers and works, this article repositions dance in New Zealand's history and highlights the transnationality of the political, cultural and social beliefs expressed via concert dance in the decades from the 1930s to the 1980s. Modern concert dance and dancers have enabled New Zealanders to ponder topics as diverse as international politics (as was said of a work performed by the New Dance Group in 1946), and sex (as a critic commented on Limbs Dance Company's 1988 *Now is the Hour*); dance and dancers have contributed to our cultural history by representing and interpreting the world that it and they inhabited.¹¹

First, an explanation of terminology is needed. Modern dance or, as it was more commonly known in New Zealand, contemporary dance traces its beginnings to late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century developments in European and American artistic practice and physical education. The use of the word 'modern' in conjunction with dance is problematic. Foucault has suggested that we think of modernity 'rather as an attitude than as a period of history ... a mode of relating to contemporary reality, a way of thinking and feeling'.¹² In the twenties, thirties and forties dance was becoming more individualistic, abstract, original, essentialist and political — characteristics it shared with the modern art of the day. In dance, particularly in the United States, the label 'modern' was applied from the late 1920s through to the mid 1960s.¹³ In art, architecture, music and literature modernism was used to describe a new set of aesthetics and forms that moved away from representation and realism. With modern dance, however, works and dancers were expressive and dramatic, and could be symbolic of individuals, nations, events or narratives. Even in the period from 1970 when dance's 'modernism' became 'post-modern' in the chronological sense, it still displayed characteristics of modernism.

To further complicate matters, the term 'modern dance' is often used antithetically. Over the course of the twentieth century the term 'modern' was applied to numerous styles and techniques of dance to describe what it was *not* — dance that was not ballet, jazz, tap, ballroom or social. In 1933 John Martin, the *New York Times*' first dance critic, explained that modern dance

was ‘a point of view’, movement made ‘to externalize personal, authentic experience’.¹⁴ The definition offered by Nancy Reynolds and Malcolm McCormick in their monumental history of dance in the twentieth century, *No Fixed Points*, is useful: ‘modern dance was thus a state of mind as much as it was an art of expressive movement.’¹⁵ Thus one could argue that modern dance was both modernist in its use of abstract, expressive movement and modern in its reference to a break with the past.¹⁶

The term ‘contemporary’, used predominantly in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand since the 1970s, encapsulates the ‘now-ness’ of much of post-WWII dance.¹⁷ Dance that engages with society is contemporary but, again, the terminology is slippery. In some contexts contemporary could be used as a descriptor of ballet, tap, hip-hop, breaking, krumping and a variety of other dance forms. For the purposes of this article I prefer the terms modern and concert dance rather than contemporary dance, applying them to dance mainly seen in concert, theatrical settings or alternative venues, but not to ballet, tap, ballroom or social dance.

Three European men, François Delsarte, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze and Rudolf Laban, have been credited with contributing philosophies and movement vocabularies that led to the development of modern dance. Both Delsarte and Jaques-Dalcroze were concerned with mental and physical well-being and developed systems of expressive postures and gestures to music. The ‘Delsarte System of Expression’, as it came to be known in America, reached its heyday of popularity in the United States in the 1880s and 1890s and made ‘thinking about the body not only advisable but fashionable’.¹⁸ The disciples of this form of physical culture aimed to achieve a harmony of physical, spiritual and intellectual well-being which was expressed by movements that emanated from different parts of the body.¹⁹ According to this system, life and vitality were expressed through the limbs and outward movement, the soul expressed by movement from the torso, and the intellect expressed by the head and inward-focused movement. By combining gestures and poses the adherents of Delsartism aimed to achieve a balance between the inner and outer self while also presenting ‘aesthetically educational entertainments’.²⁰

Jaques-Dalcroze, a Swiss music teacher and a pioneer of rhythmic gymnastics, translated ‘rhythm into bodily movements’.²¹ He developed a system, known as Eurhythmics, to assist his music students physicalise their music. The system was adopted by dancers in the early twentieth century and performed by both amateurs and professionals in Europe and the United States.²² Hungarian Rudolf Laban began teaching that ‘movement is first and fundamental in what comes forth from a human being as an expression of his intentions and experiences’, in pre-WWI Germany.²³ An immensely influential teacher, Laban’s theories of composition and his notation system ‘provided the ideas and structures for a fundamentally new and historically different dance in Europe’.²⁴ In the 1930s Laban was connected with the Nazi theatre scene and reported to Joseph Goebbels’s Propaganda Ministry; his work will always be linked with the Third Reich. As Valerie Preston-Dunlop has explained, Laban’s belief in community dance intersected with the Nazi belief in ‘kraft durch freude’ (strength through joy), though the Nazis discouraged

Laban's promotion of men in dance.²⁵ Nonetheless, Laban's importance in the elevation of dance as an art form is unquestioned. The contribution of theories and movement languages by these European men led to the evolution of a theatrical art labelled *Ausdruckstanz* (expressive dance), and its influence was evident in the development of modern dance in the United States and, soon after, New Zealand.²⁶

American women, by contrast, were the leading figures in the emergence of modern dance in the United States. Though Isadora Duncan (an American who lived most of her life abroad) is often credited as the originator of modern dance owing to her original use of music, emotional expression, bare feet and un-corsetted torso,²⁷ it was not until Ruth St Denis and Ted Shawn founded the Denishawn company in California in 1914 that modern dance became an influential art form in its own right. St Denis and Shawn introduced a new, popular form of dance that traversed 'ethnic' and spiritual ground, combining entertainment and spectacle.²⁸ Their company also nurtured Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey, both of whom became iconic choreographers.²⁹

In addition, physical educationalists aided the emergence of modern dance as a distinct art form. The pairing was cemented when teachers from Germany introduced 'gymnastic dancing' or 'dancing for health' at the 1887 Harvard Summer School of Physical Education in Boston.³⁰ In 1934, in only its second year of operation, Bennington College in Vermont became one of the first American tertiary institutions to include dance as part of a Bachelor of Arts degree. Bennington hosted a six-week summer dance programme, which 'enabled the major artists in the fragmented world of modern dance to come together in a rare atmosphere of cross-fertilization'.³¹ The dance techniques and choreographic ideas of these dance pioneers filtered back into the physical education departments from which the summer school students originated.

By the late 1930s, the New Zealand public was being introduced to modern dance. European refugees were having an impact in the arts communities of Wellington, New Plymouth, Hamilton and Auckland.³² Dance pioneers Lucie Mendl Stonnell, Gisa Taglicht, Shona Dunlop MacTavish and Margaret Barr offered dance classes in Dunedin, Wellington and Auckland respectively.³³ Lucie Mendl Stonnell, from Vienna, settled in New Plymouth in the early 1930s and soon after began offering creative dance classes for children. Her classes aimed to allow creative expression through physicality. For Mendl Stonnell, the place of dance in society should not be underestimated: 'dancing is an art of its own, and like every other art, it vibrates and is affected by every little tremor of this world and its people. Every movement a child makes in a dance is a reflex of millions of impressions, love and hate, enthusiasm or despair, that pass through its life.'³⁴ Taglicht, also from Vienna, arrived in New Zealand in 1940, leaving her homeland the year prior because of the persecution of its Jewish citizens. In Austria, Taglicht had gained a Diploma in Physical Education in addition to her studies in rhythmic dancing and mime, and it was these skills she introduced in New Zealand. Taglicht settled in Wellington, where she was appointed the YMCA's Director of Physical Education and taught her version of Laban-inspired movement for 20 years.³⁵ The 1948 film *Rhythm and Movement*, part of the National Film Unit's *Weekly Review* series,

showed Taglicht pounding a drum while her young female students bounded through the air and swayed in time to her beat. The movement was natural and free; the dancers' bare legs and feet blatant examples of modern dance. The score for this short film, by Douglas Lilburn, added to the feeling of abandon and freedom.³⁶

Boukje Van Zon continued this tradition in Auckland from the 1950s through to the 1980s.³⁷ Van Zon began her dance training as a child in Holland in the 1920s, after involvement with rhythmic dance at primary school. This was the era in which the theories and training methods of Laban and Jaques-Dalcroze were gaining prominence. By her teens she was teaching dance and choreographing for her students. Van Zon arrived in New Zealand in 1951, and the following year she began giving dance classes in the west Auckland suburb of Te Atatu. Van Zon stressed that technique and creativity were equal elements in dance. Movement needed a purpose; every exercise was to be done with the 'spirit' and the mind. Her dedicated students were able to explore choreography outside of normal class time as she made her studios available on Saturday afternoons. She encouraged aspiring choreographers, believing that 'when a person creates, a radiance and beauty comes from within them'.³⁸

While dance techniques and philosophies were coming to New Zealand from Europe, New Zealanders were also travelling to acquire dance knowledge. Dunedin-born Shona Dunlop MacTavish left New Zealand for Vienna in 1935, aged 15.³⁹ At the studio of Gertrud Bodenwieser she was taught expressive dance combining the discipline of ballet with Laban's movement theories and the postural, gestural and rhythmic ideas of Delsarte and Jaques-Dalcroze. Bodenwieser's dances have been described as thematic, with titles such as *The Great Hours*, *Rhythms of the Subconscious* and *Masks of Lucifer*. The best known, *Demon Machine* (1923), aimed to reflect the 'perils of mechanization', a common theme of modern dance in the post-WWI era.⁴⁰ Dunlop MacTavish, who performed in *Demon Machine*, joined the company in 1938, just as most of her dancing companions were forced to flee the Nazis. After touring with Bodenwieser to South America, the company eventually settled in Sydney, where Bodenwieser established a studio. Dunlop MacTavish toured New Zealand as a member of Bodenwieser's company in 1947. In 1956, following marriage, motherhood and widowhood, Dunlop MacTavish settled back in Dunedin, from where she continues to teach and choreograph.⁴¹

Rona Bailey (then known by her maiden name, Rona Stephenson) went to the United States in 1937 to attend the University of California at Berkeley. There, as a physical education student of Lucille Czarnowski, Bailey was exposed to the nascent forms of modern dance.⁴² Crossing the country the following year, she enrolled in the physical education programme at Barnard Teachers' College, at Columbia University. Barnard offered a course titled 'Studies in Modern Dance, Theory and Practice'. The college announcement stated that this course covered 'pertinent problems in dance such as: dance as a reflection of our social scene, the medium of dance, rhythm with accompaniment, design, the creative approach'.⁴³ In New York Bailey was taught the techniques and philosophies of modern dance's most influential

personalities, including Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Louis Horst (mentor to Martha Graham), Charles Weidman and the dance critic of the *New York Times*, John Martin.

It was not just her dance education that influenced Bailey while she was in the United States. Bailey saw inspirational works choreographed by Graham and Humphrey in New York during 1938–1939 that boasted dramatic movement vocabulary and innovative themes and structures. Graham's *Frontier* (1935) and *American Document* (1938) took the 'American pioneer' as their subject and explored, via her individualistic movement vocabulary, the settler's internal and external space. Graham described *Frontier* as about 'roads that disappear into the distance, or a railroad track. The questing spirit is there and the sense of establishing roots.'⁴⁴ In *Frontier*, the solo dancer, situated in the space by a fence and a length of rope that defines the stage in the shape of an inverted V, conjured 'the vision of a limitless land which she had settled herself'.⁴⁵ Graham marked the 'frontier' with small steps that evolved to large swinging-leg jumps, translating the vastness of the empty land into movement. The music, by Horst, reflected the sparse, open space. Bailey recollected that *Frontier* was 'one of the most wonderful dances' that she had ever seen.⁴⁶ Another piece that Bailey saw performed in New York, Humphrey's *New Dance Trilogy* (1935–1936), consisted of three different works that ranged from a choral drama, to a social commentary and abstract dance. *New Dance Trilogy* was 'more than a landmark, it was a mountain that towered above the entire modern dance landscape'.⁴⁷ There is no doubt that this groundbreaking work influenced Bailey's own choreographic aspirations.

Humphrey's dance works, style and vocabulary differed in significant ways from Graham's. Where Graham's movement was angular, staccato and sharp, Humphrey encouraged flowing, breath-filled movement. While Graham's dancers flexed their feet and cupped their hands, the dancers in Humphrey's works embraced the air surrounding them with curved, bent arms framing their bodies. Graham's early choreography has been described as possessing 'severity, what people then would have called its ugliness'.⁴⁸ Humphrey's works, sometimes danced without musical accompaniment and usually barefooted, were 'visual music from pure motion'. Her movement vocabulary was built on principles of "fall", "rebound", and "suspension" of the body's weight', which gave her dances a lyrical, wave-like quality.⁴⁹

Upon her return to New Zealand in 1939, Bailey was employed as a Physical Welfare Officer by the Department of Internal Affairs' Physical Welfare and Recreation Branch.⁵⁰ Bailey's first 'posting' was in the Waikato, where she met Philip Smithells.⁵¹ Prior to meeting Smithells, Bailey had been closely associated with the left-leaning Hamilton People's Theatre, whose founder, Ron Meek, was her first husband. Bailey's ideas about art and politics were reinforced by Meek's conviction that drama needed to be reflective and challenging. In Wellington, for instance, she gave a lecture at Unity Theatre titled 'Can the theatre be used as a propaganda weapon?'⁵² She voiced similar concerns about dance: 'I felt that modern dance had a role to play in reflecting life and what it could be. It could be a challenge to people.'⁵³ In Smithells, Bailey met a kindred spirit, for he shared her ideas about the need to combine

art and politics and to express social activism through dance. As Bailey explained: ‘When we first met we just clicked. Philip had been interested in the development of what was happening in America in dance. He immediately offered me a job in the Education Department [in Wellington]. We were on the same wavelength.’⁵⁴

Born in England in 1910, Smithells graduated from Cambridge University in 1932. His secondary school education at the progressive Bedales College in Hampshire exposed him to alternative educational practices and, most likely, to dance in the school curriculum. Appointed Superintendent of Physical Education in 1939 under innovative Assistant Director of Education Clarence Beeby, Smithells arrived in Wellington with progressive ideas about physical education, not least a belief in the centrality of dance to human well-being. Although he was not a dancer, his views on the value of dance in society were ahead of his time.⁵⁵ Smithells suffered condemnation in New Zealand; his aversion to ‘military’ drill as physical education combined with his commitment to the incorporation of music, theatre and dance into the curriculum antagonised many physical education traditionalists.⁵⁶ Although the 1912 Education Amendment Act altered the delivery of physical education to include ‘games and dances’ it was the physical element of dance that was emphasised, not the creative or the expressive.⁵⁷ For Smithells, physical activity and human expression were intertwined; ‘Brain and Body, Body and Mind, Movement and Thought and Feeling’, he argued, were ‘all inseparable functions of the body’.⁵⁸ Just as important were his Quaker beliefs. Smithells advocated peace, social justice and equality, and these tenets permeated all his professional relationships and teaching philosophies.⁵⁹

The Wellington-based New Dance Group, founded by Bailey and Smithells, along with Smithells’s wife Olive and Czechoslovakian refugee Edith Sipos, introduced a hitherto unknown notion of dance to audiences. It was ‘modern’, political and expressive, connecting New Zealand audiences to new ideas about dance and music as they developed overseas.⁶⁰ Between 1945 and 1947 more than 25 physical education students and teachers became members of the New Dance Group.⁶¹ In 1945, Smithells wrote of the New Dance Group’s early years: ‘we were anxious to avoid the well-trodden and too worn paths of ballet, operatic, or acrobatic dance, and the type of interpretative dance that reeks with sentimentality.’⁶² Sharing movement styles with their New York namesake The New Dance Group (begun in 1932), the Wellington New Dance Group also exhibited comparable principles, that is, that ‘dance is a weapon in the class struggle’ and could be used in the service of society.⁶³ The founding Wellington members were, according to poet Anton Vogt, ‘interested in dance as a living art, not a museum piece’ and believed that dance was ‘something to do because it is significant, not because it is “nice”’.⁶⁴ Their work *Hiroshima* (1947), for instance, led an anonymous reviewer to write, ‘in an age which has no more words to describe human catastrophe, it may be that such a presentation can lead to greater clarity of thought and deeper realization of the social implications of scientific discovery’.⁶⁵

NEW ZEALAND
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A SCENE from "Hiroshima" devised and produced recently by the Wellington New Dance Group (see page 4)

**THE
RAZOR
G-L-I-D-E**

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Q-TOL SKIN EMOLLIENT into
your beard **before you lather.**
Q-TOL conditions your skin,
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ADVANCE PROGRAMMES FROM ALL STATIONS

Figure 1: Olive Smithells in the New Dance Group's *Hiroshima*.

Source: *New Zealand Listener*, 7 November 1947.

The New Dance Group faced significant challenges: its membership was not stable and never worked professionally. It was able to put on only a handful of public performances over three years and never toured beyond Feilding. It was also short-lived, coming to an end when Philip and Olive Smithells moved to Dunedin in 1948.⁶⁶ Nonetheless the group managed to introduce radical ideas about dance, art, music and physical education to New Zealand. The dancers themselves were exposed to new ways of thinking, with one recalling that Bailey taught them not only dance but 'to have vision, integrity and courage to do what we wanted to do and not to be put off by anybody'.⁶⁷ Audiences were affected too. The group's first performance, in October 1945 at the Wellington Technical College Hall, prompted Bruce Mason to comment: 'I think most of us that night felt we were seeing for the first time glimpses of an instrument subtle and flexible, promising a richness greater in some ways than the arts of drama, music and design could give alone.'⁶⁸

Inspired by developments in dance in New York and Europe and driven by the belief that dance could reflect life and society, Smithells and Bailey aimed to alter the way people thought about dance. They also addressed wider issues. The New Dance Group's dances reflected international themes of the 1930s and 1940s, with titles such as *Monotony Chorus*, *The Dance of Two Women*, *Sabotage in a Factory* and the aforementioned *Hiroshima*. The New Dance Group crossed boundaries of art, politics and nations.

The 'Golden Weather' of 1950s New Zealand produced a lull in the development of concert dance, with the notable exception of the founding

of the New Zealand Ballet Company by Poul Gnatt in 1953.⁶⁹ There was a proliferation of ballet studios throughout the country in the 1950s and 1960s, but modern concert dance remained a relatively unknown art form. Francesca Horsley has argued that New Zealand ballet flourished at this time because of the glamour associated with ballerinas: 'ballerinas lived high profile lives, were icons of beauty and artistry.'⁷⁰ New Zealand had its own celebrated 1950s ballerina, Rowena Jackson. Jackson fulfilled the fantasy of exquisite beauty and international success by appearing in leading roles as a member of Britain's Royal Ballet, and stories of her exploits in London were frequently reported in local newspapers.⁷¹

While Jackson was making her mark internationally, men were also assuming prominent places in twentieth-century New Zealand dance, both ballet and modern. Pākehā men such as ballet dancer Thomas O'Carroll/Jan Caryll were praised for their dancing, which was said to evoke virility and grace.⁷² Caryll, along with fellow ballet dancers Harold Robinson and Bryan Ashbridge, served in the military *and* danced.⁷³

John Casserley was introduced to dance for the first time while a student of Philip Smithells at Otago, and this propelled him into a dance career. Casserley has said that Smithells was 'important in many ways', not least of all in his insistence that 'all of his students take courses in modern dance'.⁷⁴ Of course Smithells's students included both men and women, and his legacy is in the numerous students who advanced to professional careers in dance.⁷⁵ Casserley also credits the film *West Side Story* (1961), directed and choreographed by the iconoclastic American choreographer Jerome Robbins, as being an influence on both his and others' perceptions of men dancing at this time. He believed that 'a much larger public enjoyed experiencing males and movement in new ways', owing to Robbins's innovations in choreography for men.⁷⁶ Deborah Jowitt, Robbins's biographer, described the men's dances in *West Side Story* in exciting terms: 'bravado, stealth, fear, playfulness, and anger meet in combat, revealed in actions that shrug their way into dance and as quickly drop back into everyday behaviour'.⁷⁷ Though far from the mean streets of the upper West Side of Manhattan, Casserley was nonetheless liberated by the sight of men in jeans expressing joy, fear and anger through dance. Of course, earlier filmed musicals had included men dancing (for example, Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly), but their dancing lacked the rawness, aggression, virility and integration with character that was evident in Robbins's choreography.

Dancers such as Casserley were at the forefront of the move of modern dance into theatres, studios, schools and gymnasia throughout the country by the mid 1970s. In 1972 Casserley established the group New Dance in Dunedin. New Dance toured throughout the country in 1973 with assistance from the New Zealand Students' Arts Council. It was the first national tour of a modern dance group. Following the lead of New Dance, Jamie Bull began Wellington's Impulse Dance Theatre in 1975, while Susan Jordan founded Movement Theatre at the University of Auckland in 1976.

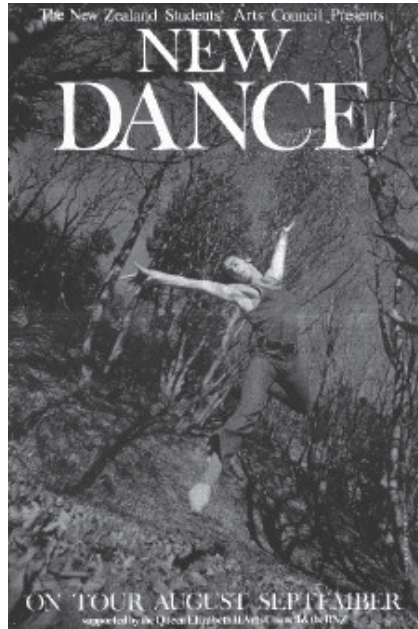


Figure 2: John Casserley leaps into New Dance, 1973.

Source: National Dance Archives, 92-002, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

With air travel becoming easier and the ‘OE’ more common, new developments in modern dance accelerated as dancers left for the United Kingdom and the USA to learn and returned home to teach. Film and television also introduced dancers in New Zealand to performances by choreographer-led companies such as those of Paul Taylor and Alwin Nikolais.⁷⁸ It was through this increased presence of modern dance that Limbs Dance Company emerged in 1977. Limbs’ founding members — Christopher Jannides, Mary Jane O’Reilly, Mark Baldwin, Kilda Northcott and Debbie McCulloch — came together at a gathering of dancers at Porangahau on the Rongomaraeroa Marae on the East Coast of the North Island in January 1977.⁷⁹ Each had a different background in dance, but all shared the desire to create dances that reflected the *zeitgeist* of the 1970s.

Jannides grew up in Wellington in a Greek family. By 1976, at age 21, he was living in Auckland and working with the University of Auckland-based Movement Theatre.⁸⁰ He left Movement Theatre at the end of 1976, explaining that the physical and psychological heaviness of the Graham-based technique shaping Movement Theatre’s dances and themes made him feel uneasy. Moreover, Jannides was already developing ideas for his own choreography that clashed with what Jordan considered appropriate for modern dance. Jannides had ‘choreographed a duet to pop music’.⁸¹ After the director objected that popular music was not suitable for modern dance, Jannides’s desire to choreograph and experiment with composition intensified. Fortunately, following the

gathering at Porangahau, he was invited to present a free lunchtime concert as part of orientation festivities at the University of Auckland in March 1977. This concert at the Maidment Theatre ('A Modern Dance Concert devised by Christopher Jannides') featured the work *Hey Negrita*, danced to the Rolling Stones song of the same name.⁸² Jannides had succeeded in setting dances to popular music and Limbs' direction was laid down.

Baldwin, born in Fiji in 1954, grew up in Auckland and was exposed to dance at a young age: 'my earliest memories are of watching Polynesian dancing and *Giselle* and strangely enough they got somehow mixed up in my brain. Ever since I can remember I always wanted to be a dancer.'⁸³ Though encouraged to pursue visual arts by his architect father — he graduated from the Elam School of Fine Arts in 1976 — Baldwin rejected art after graduation and pursued a dance career instead. While at Elam he covertly used his scholarship fund to attend dance classes: ballet with Kevin Baddily and Russell Kerr, and modern dance with Mary Jane O'Reilly, another founding member of Limbs. Baldwin was also a member of Movement Theatre in 1976.

Kilda Northcott and Debbie McCulloch, both charismatic and experienced performers, had the least choreographic ambitions of the group. Twenty-two-year-old Northcott had studied dance since she was six years old, in Kawerau, and had recently returned to New Zealand from New York, where she was schooled in the techniques of José Limón and Merce Cunningham. Her year in New York (1975–1976) gave her performance opportunities in the works of the Hungarian choreographer Reka. Prior to this, Northcott had studied the *Ausdruckstanz*-inspired technique at the Bodenwieser school in Sydney.⁸⁴ Debbie McCulloch had begun creative dance classes at the school of Dutch émigré Boukje Van Zon, in Auckland at age 10. Van Zon's influence — the stressing of creativity *and* technique — was evident in McCulloch's expressive dance qualities.

O'Reilly, the most experienced of the five founding members, had the most dance training, having been a member of the first graduating class of the New Zealand School of Dance in 1968. The following year she danced with the New Zealand Ballet Company.⁸⁵ By 1970 O'Reilly was a scholarship student at the Royal Ballet School in London. While in London, in between stints as an extra with the Royal Ballet, O'Reilly had her first taste of modern concert dance at the London Contemporary Dance School. By 1976 she was back in Auckland and had opened her own studio, Dance Spectrum. Travelling to California for six months that year, she studied the techniques of Cunningham and Limón in San Francisco. Neither technique was known in New Zealand at this time, and when O'Reilly returned she taught them to her students, among them Jannides and Baldwin.

Devoid of narrative, symbolism or characterisation, Cunningham's work pared down movement to its essence and avoided any trappings of sentimentality, romantic ideal, virtuosity or gender. He was regarded as one of the greatest dance innovators of the twentieth century.⁸⁶ His works, which have been described as allowing audiences 'the responsibility, the privilege, of thinking for themselves', disrupt traditional performance expectations from both the performer's and audience's perspective.⁸⁷ Using chance methods to

assemble the choreography, Cunningham, who had been a dancer in Martha Graham's company in the 1940s, introduced an androgynous element into dance. Whereas the mid-century modern dancers might have been outfitted in dresses or skirts for the women and tights or slacks for the men, Cunningham's men and women wore the same costumes, usually tights and leotards or all-in-one tights (unitards) designed to reveal the line of the movement. Cunningham's dance vocabulary, and the vocabulary of his followers, erased difference between men's and women's movements. The movement was the crucial element, not who performed it. His dances have been described as 'space and time, shape and rhythm', nothing more or less.⁸⁸

Mexican-American Limón was Doris Humphrey's protégé, and developed her technique and aesthetic in his works. His technique worked on the principles of 'fall and recovery', as did Humphrey's, but Limón emphasised the distribution of weight of the dancer's body and the control thereof. For instance, when a dance called for the dancer to leap and fall to the ground, the effort needed to get off the ground was not hidden but 'the power behind it', the defiance of gravity, was evident.⁸⁹ Music and musicality played a big part in both Limón's technique and his choreography. His dances were full of expressive lyricism and drama and, Jowitt believes, 'could exalt our view of humankind'.⁹⁰ These vocabularies, concepts and techniques infiltrated the rehearsal studio of Limbs. They also transformed the dance-making processes of choreographers in New Zealand.

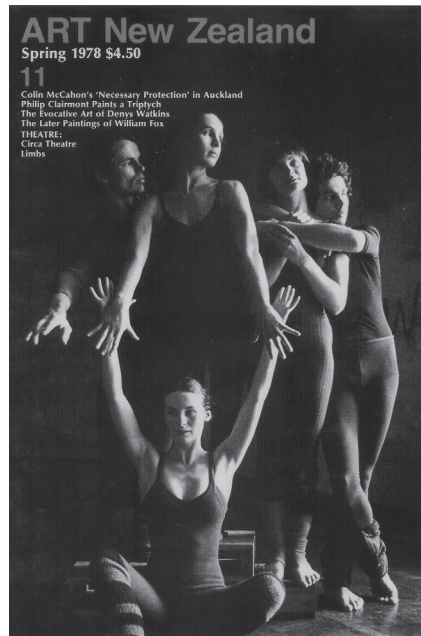


Figure 3: Limbs Dance Company, photograph by Marti Friedlander.

Source: *Art New Zealand*, Spring 1978, collection of author.

Jannides and Baldwin believed that dance could reflect contemporary life by utilising popular music, simple costumes and settings and by incorporating jazz, disco, ballet and/or pedestrian movement. Baldwin has said that he and Jannides ‘had notions of performance before we had technique’.⁹¹ Both had studied clowning and mime and were heavily influenced by the theories of English stage director and theorist Peter Brook. Their crossing of disciplines and approaches to art-making reflected many developments in popular culture in the 1970s. Popular music, visual art, fashion and drama often overlapped. The visual arts, in this post-modern age, often combined a ‘multiplicity of style and method’.⁹² ‘Happenings’ often included music, dance, street theatre and poetry readings. Baldwin’s first choreography, *Square Dance* (1978), was, as he explained it, ‘an art school sculptural-conceptual thing’.⁹³ The work, inspired by the collaborations of Cunningham and the visual artist Robert Rauchenberg, began with Baldwin and Jannides marking a square on the floor of the performance space with masking tape. To the sound of a ticking metronome, the two men marched along the outside and gradually entered the square. Facing off, they came closer and finally performed a tango together.

Peter Brook’s belief that ‘space is a tool’ struck a chord with Jannides and Baldwin. It coincided with their idea of wanting ‘dance to access different places and different people’; Jannides in particular felt strongly that dance should not be a ‘theatrical, elitist thing’.⁹⁴ Experimenting with Brook’s theories, which included breaking down the convention that proscenium arch theatres were the only acceptable ‘room’ for drama to take place, they took their dances outdoors, to cabarets, to fashion shows, nightclubs, into the foyers of theatres, car launches, student commons, schools and prisons.⁹⁵

Their vision of dance was manifested in Limbs, especially when it began to associate with other popular and alternative entertainments in New Zealand. Within its first two years of existence Limbs had performed at large outdoor music festivals such as Nambassa and Sweetwaters and had toured with diverse performing companies such as Ratz Theatrix, Blerta, Red Mole, The Plague, and Debbie and the Dum Dums. This enabled dance to become part of the late 1970s popular culture.⁹⁶ Limbs’ appearance at the Nambassa and Sweetwaters music festivals exerted the greatest influence on both Limbs and their audiences. The dancers were exposed to huge audiences who most likely had never seen a modern, concert dance performance. This exposure, while giving modern dance a public profile, also made Limbs well known to a large segment of the population. The programmes that they performed at these festivals were no different from those they performed in theatres, thus achieving Jannides’s wish of breaking through the class barrier of theatre and elitist art by presenting ‘high’ art in a popular music setting.

The landscape of dance and performance in New Zealand experienced a seismic shift once Douglas Wright entered the field of choreography. Beginning his dance career at Limbs in 1980, Wright choreographed his first work in 1981. Titled *Backstreet Primary*, its theme was rugby culture and a boy’s reluctance to play the game at school. The fact that this work premiered a few months after the Springbok tour protests was most likely not a coincidence; the reviewer for the *Auckland Star* thought as much, reporting that *Backstreet Primary* injected

‘a strong dose of social comment into an athletically lyrical framework’.⁹⁷ For Wright, the work was ‘pretty literal; it is about someone being forced to play rugby’.⁹⁸ The choreographer believes that it was ‘probably the first of its kind of piece that Limbs had done; not exactly a protest piece, but it did have an axe to grind. It was a little bit meatier than some of their other works.’⁹⁹

As seen in a filmed performance, *Backstreet Primary* began with the entrance of a hooded Ku Klux Klan figure.¹⁰⁰ Wright lay on his back close to the front of the stage while four dancers (two women and two men) dressed in rugby shirts and shorts entered the space. As the four dancers leapt, ran, walked and crossed the stage in large strides Wright remained separate. The music, by 1980s band Talking Heads, was punctuated with a driving, tribal drumbeat. The choreography never literally imitated a game of rugby, though scrum-like formations were seen at various times in the dance, in which Wright was forced to join. The ever-present Klan figure was confronted by Wright, but the two never touched. The work ended with Wright on his back centre stage and the hooded figure standing centre slightly swaying. The four others then flanked them, in positions reminiscent of a prow, the men standing and the women on the floor lying through the men’s legs and holding on to the end of their shirts as in a scrum.

Backstreet Primary was significant in many ways, not least of all because audiences saw the first glimpse of Wright’s signature movement vocabulary and his gymnast’s body exposed in jumps, falls and propulsions off the ground. Wright seemed to defy both gravity and ordinary human strength. And yet the central theme of the work was not Wright’s masculine strength but the renouncing of a New Zealand male rite of passage; specifically, participating in rugby at school. Wright used the image of a strong male body (his own) to contradict an iconic New Zealand male activity: rugby playing. The physicality of Wright’s movements symbolised a new version of the masculine New Zealander. Displayed in a concert dance setting, it provided a demonstration of how a muscular male body, normally what the gender scholar Alan Petersen has described as ‘a dominant metaphor for such masculine virtues as physical strength, rugged individualism, and mastery over one’s environment’, could be used to convey other ideas.¹⁰¹ *Backstreet Primary* provoked audiences to consider male muscularity as both a symbol of hegemonic New Zealand masculinity (a rugby player) and a rejection of the same. Wright’s body, clothed in rugby stripes and shorts, defied the normal New Zealand reading of young men’s physicality.

Wright’s career in dance ran parallel to the emergence of the gay male identity in New Zealand. During the time that he lived in New York (1983 to 1987), gay rights came to the fore of national debates. Craig Young has argued that following the passage of the Homosexual Law Reform Act in 1986 gay men and lesbians ‘achieved a degree of social acceptance’ in New Zealand.¹⁰² The Aids epidemic also impacted significantly on the male gay community, and Wright, returning to New Zealand from New York in 1987, was acutely aware of the devastation amongst his colleagues.

In 1988 Wright choreographed *Now is the Hour* for Limbs.¹⁰³ The structure for this piece was inspired by the episodic nature of the work of the German

dance-theatre doyenne Pina Bausch. Wright's *Now is the Hour* gave its audiences an assemblage of dancers as transvestites, numerous bare buttocks and breasts, a topless mermaid, and a sheep being shorn on stage. Bausch and her Wuppertal Dance Theatre revolutionised dance in the 1980s. Her company, made up of highly trained dancers from a variety of nations, danced, spoke and sang Bausch's often controversial works. Bausch's work developed the *Ausdruckstanz* of the early twentieth century and turned it into *Tanztheater* (dance theatre). Theatrical devices such as repetition, juxtaposition and incongruous costumes and situations (men in dresses, women carrying men, violence accompanied by laughter) were echoed in Wright's work.¹⁰⁴ Wright peopled his dance with scantily clad men in bikinis, a woman in a tuxedo and naked human bodies with fish as heads. Their movements seemed to connect with audiences on a deep, visceral level, and the work was highly praised by critics. '*Now is the Hour*', one wrote, 'is a dance work of momentous importance exemplifying the coming of age of contemporary dance in New Zealand'.¹⁰⁵ Humour, pathos and drama intermingled in this 70-minute work.

In *Now is the Hour* Wright performed as a lone figure and his physical exertions brought to mind a tortured soul trying to escape his body. He was the prodigal son within the company of the other dancers. A protest staged outside the Baycourt Theatre by the Concerned Citizens group of Tauranga reflected the controversy that this work generated. Whether it was the naked bodies, the screaming women or the sheep on stage, it is difficult to know what most upset these concerned citizens. Placards that read 'The height of art or the depth of disgrace' and 'You can't pull the wool over God's eyes' greeted audiences as they entered the theatre. Fortunately, other citizens of Tauranga proved capable of laughing at themselves when, during a performance in the middle of the sheep-shearing scene, someone yelled: 'Disgusting! Put its clothes back on!'¹⁰⁶ Provincial New Zealand had not seen a work like *Now is the Hour* before. Wright (and his collaborators) gave New Zealanders contemporary dance-theatre that challenged preconceived notions of what dance was and provoked discussion in every town it toured. Unfortunately, the controversy may have contributed to the demise of Limbs. Cath Cardiff, who was the artistic director of the company, believed that *Now is the Hour* was 'way ahead of its time'.¹⁰⁷ A year after this work premiered the company folded.



Figure 4: The Concerned Citizens Group of Tauranga protests Limbs Dance Company's performance of *Now is the Hour* outside the Baycourt Theatre.

Source: *Bay of Plenty Times*, 26 March 1988, p.1.

The New Dance Group, New Dance and Limbs Dance Company offered new experiences to their audiences. The 300 people who were present at the first performance of the New Dance Group in 1945¹⁰⁸ and the 1,200 who crammed into the Wellington Opera House in 1979 to see Limbs are testament to both the curiosity and appreciation of the public for this art form.¹⁰⁹ This 'new dance' was speaking to people in ways that an evening at the ballet (or a rugby match) could not. Leaps and runs, turns and jumps, falls and lifts; one could see an athlete perform these moves but would a spectator be moved to ponder catastrophes in Europe, gender identities or conceptual art during a game? Dance is more than a vehicle for comprehension; it provides us with a way to experience our surroundings by transcending the everyday, the material, the tangible. The moving body in space can speak to the rational mind of history and, if we are aware, can transmit more than words can ever say. These reflections on modern concert dance within a New Zealand context enable us to reconsider how bodies in motion expressed, responded to and represented both international and national identities in the twentieth century. The world's place in New Zealand could be seen in the bodies of dancers and the movements they spoke. It seems that modern concert dance in New Zealand did reflect the 'real life, work and heritage in this country', as Rona Bailey hoped in 1978, by presenting dances that made their audiences think, feel and question. In turn, audiences were connected to global forms of expression. However, unlike a novel or a painting, which can be revisited, the movements of the dancers discussed here were fleeting, their presence remembered only as phantom limbs.

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NOTES

1 *Salient*, 31 July 1978, p.15.

2 Peter Gibbons, 'The Far Side of the Search for Identity: Reconsidering New Zealand History', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 37, 1 (2003), p.47.

3 *ibid.*

4 William H. McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History*, Cambridge, 1995, p.10.

5 In their accounts of the creation of a nationalist voice the general histories of New Zealand emphasise literature, poetry and visual art and concentrate on the period from the late nineteenth century through to the mid-twentieth. Keith Sinclair celebrated the writers John Mulgan, Robin Hyde and Frank Sargeson, as did Michael King. While James Belich commented on the touring opera companies of the 1860s and the spread of folk songs and social dance music in the late nineteenth century, he referred to twentieth-century New Zealand as a cultural 'wasteland'. Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, rev. edn, Auckland, 2000, pp.286–91; Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland, 2005, pp.415–19; James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland, 2001, pp.328–35. Giselle Byrnes, ed., *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, Melbourne, 2009 is striking in its lack of reference to the performing arts generally and dance specifically.

6 Sinclair, *History of New Zealand*, p.290. Barry Gustafson's, 'The National Governments and Social Change (1949–72)', in Keith Sinclair, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, Auckland, 1990, pp.267–70, is a notable exception. Gustafson highlights the performing arts and mentions singers Oscar Natzke, Inia Te Wiata and Kiri Te Kanawa; professional theatre companies The New Zealand Players, Downstage and Mercury Theatre; and the founding of the New Zealand Ballet in 1953. W.H. Oliver also included the performing arts in his contribution to the 1981 *Oxford History of New Zealand*, mentioning the founding of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the ballet company and theatre groups. The bulk of his chapter, however, focused on the work of writers and painters: W.H. Oliver, 'The Awakening Imagination', in W.H. Oliver, ed., *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1981, pp.430–61.

7 There were dancers working in New Zealand from 1913, following the visit of ballet stars Adeline Genée and Alexander Volinin. South Island-born Thomas O'Carroll (Jan Caryll) danced in Wellington from 1915 until he left New Zealand permanently in 1920. Joe Knowsley ran a successful dance studio in Wellington with hundreds of students between 1922 and 1938 and produced many professional dancers, including Thurza Rodgers, who toured with the Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova and Bryan Ashbridge and became a celebrated dancer in Britain's Royal Ballet from the late 1940s. See Marianne Schultz, 'From the Haka to *Dancing with the Stars*: New Zealand Men Dancing, 1905–2005', MLitt thesis, The University of Auckland, 2008.

8 Caroline Daley, 'Introduction', in *Leisure & Pleasure: Reshaping & Revealing the New Zealand Body, 1900–1960*, Auckland, 2003, pp.1–11.

9 Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male — a History*, Auckland, 1987, p.85.

10 Julia L. Foulkes, *Modern Bodies: Dance and American Modernism from Martha Graham to Alvin Ailey*, Chapel Hill, 2002, p.3.

11 See, for example, Anton Vogt's comment on the New Dance Group, 'The fact remains that we are aware of conditions in Europe and the group's action made us more aware', in 'Dance is Exciting', *New Zealand Physical Education Society Bulletin*, February 1946, p.15. On Limbs, see 'Sex seems to be very much at the centre of the new show', *Dominion Sunday Times*, 28 February 1988, p.18. Choreographer Douglas Wright was quoted in the same article: 'I think dance is sex really. It is about coming to terms with sexuality.'

12 Michael Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment', cited in Patricia Waugh, ed., *Postmodernism: A Reader*, London, 1992, p.100.

13 See Jack Anderson, *Art Without Boundaries: The Word of Modern Dance*, Iowa City, 1997; Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance*, Middletown, 1987; Don McDonagh, *Complete Guide to Modern Dance*, New York, 1977; Ellen Graff, *Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City, 1928–1942*, Durham, 1999; Foulkes; Margaret Lloyd, *The Borzoi Book of Modern Dance*, New York, 1949, for overviews and descriptions of modern and post-modern dance techniques, artists and works.

14 John Martin cited in Selma Jeanne Cohen, ed., *The Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief*, Middletown, 1966, p.4.

15 Nancy Reynolds and Malcolm McCormick, *No Fixed Points: Dance in the Twentieth Century*, New Haven, 2003, p.142.

16 Sally Banes argues that modern dance from the 1930s and 1940s was 'never really modernist. Often it has been in the arena of post-modern dance that issues of modernism in the other arts have arisen: the acknowledgment of the medium's materials, the revealing of dance's essential qualities as an art form, the separation of formal elements, the abstraction of forms, and the elimination of external references as subjects'. Banes, p.xv.

17 Jack Anderson describes the founding of the London School of Contemporary Dance, where many modern dance techniques were offered, in 1966, as reflective of a new approach to modern dance: 'the school was trying to cope with the problem of trying to give students a sound technical foundation while at the same time allowing them to remain open to unconventional ways of performing and choreographing', Anderson, p.262. This approach was adopted in New Zealand in the late 1970s, especially with Movement Theatre, Impulse and Limbs dance companies.

18 Deborah Jowitt, *Time and the Dancing Image*, Berkeley, 1988, p.78.

19 Ann Daly, *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America*, Bloomington, 1995, pp.123–29.

20 *ibid.*, p.125.

21 Reynolds and McCormick, p.79.

22 Jowitt, *Time and the Dancing Image*, pp.158–61.

23 *ibid.*, p.81.

24 Marion Kant, 'German Dance and Modernity: Don't Mention the Nazis', in Alexandra Carter, ed., *Rethinking Dance History: A Reader*, London, 2004, p.107.

25 Valerie Preston-Dunlop, 'Laban and the Nazis: Towards an understanding of Rudolf Laban and the Third Reich', *Dance Theatre Journal*, 6, 2 (1988), pp.4–7.

26 See Reynolds and McCormick, especially pp.77–105.

27 See Isadora Duncan, *Your Isadora*, New York, 1974; Daly; Reynolds and McCormick, pp.14–21; Jowitt, *Time and the Dancing Image*, pp.69–102.

28 For a history of Denishawn see Jowitt, *Time and the Dancing Image*, pp.138–45; also Reynolds and McCormick, pp.25–29.

29 Marcia B. Siegel, *Days on Earth: The Dance of Doris Humphrey*, New Haven, 1987; Marian Horosko, *Martha Graham: The Evolution of her Dance Theory and Training*, rev. edn, Gainesville, 2002. The influence that Laban's pupils, especially Mary Wigman and Hanya Holm, had on American modern dance should also be noted. See Reynolds and McCormick, pp.77–92, also Susan Manning, *Ecstasy and the Demon: Feminism and Nationalism in the Dances of Mary Wigman*, Berkeley, 1993; and Lloyd, pp.11–22.

30 Ann Barzel, 'European Dance Teachers in the United States', *Dance Index*, III, 4, 5, 6 (1944), p.72.

31 Reynolds and McCormick, p.174.

32 See Rachel Barrowman, *A Popular Vision: The Arts and the Left in New Zealand, 1930–1950*, Wellington, 1991 for detailed accounts of political theatre reflective of international developments.

33 See Lucie Mendl Stonnell, *Creative Dance*, New Plymouth, 1975; Shona Dunlop MacTavish, *Leap of Faith: My Dance through Life*, Dunedin, 1997; Tup Lang, 'Gisa Taglicht: Dance Pioneer', *Dance News*, 22, September 1992; Caryll Von Sturmer, *Margaret Barr: An Epic Individual*, Sydney, 1993.

34 Mendl Stonnell, p.21.

35 Margaret Dart, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (DNZB), 'Gisela Taglicht, 1998–1981', updated 21 May 2002. <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/5t1/1>. See also Tup Lang, pp.5–7.

36 Weekly Review 346: *Rhythm and Movement*, Wellington, 1948, produced by Stanhope Andrews, directed by Michael Forlong, F790, New Zealand Film Archive, Wellington.

37 Rani Hill, 'Kept on her toes by a long dance career – Boukje Van Zon', *Western Leader*, 7 June 1988, p.7.

38 Julie Eaddy, 'Boukje Van Zon', unpublished research essay, New Zealand School of Dance, Wellington, c.1990.

39 Dunlop MacTavish, pp.19–38.

40 Anderson, pp.91–92. See also Graff.

41 Dunlop MacTavish, pp.66–104; Francesa Horsley, 'The Great MacTavish', *New Zealand Listener*, 14 February 2004, pp.50–52.

42 Rona Bailey, interviewed by Jan Bolwell, 1991, OHist-0164/5, side 3, 5.5, Oral History Centre, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL), Wellington.

- 43 'Announcement of Teachers College, Columbia University, 1938–39, Health and Physical Education Program, Division IV, instruction', p.221.
- 44 Marcia B. Siegel, *The Shapes of Change: Images of American Dance*, Berkeley 1985, p.14.
- 45 McDonagh, p.78.
- 46 Bailey, interviewed by Jan Bolwell, 1991, OHist-0164/5, side 3, 6.8, ATL.
- 47 Lloyd, p.94.
- 48 Joan Acocella, *Twenty-Eight Artists and Two Saints: Essays*, New York, 2007, p.294.
- 49 José Limón, in Lynn Garafola, ed., *An Unfinished Memoir*, Middletown, 1998, pp.27–29.
- 50 For the background of the physical welfare movement see Daley, *Leisure & Pleasure*, pp.226–50.
- 51 Bailey, interviewed by Jan Bolwell, 1991, OHist-0164/5, side 4, 15, ATL.
- 52 Barrowman, p.244.
- 53 Bailey, interviewed by Jan Bolwell, 1991, OHist-0164/5, side 3, 12.8–13.8, ATL.
- 54 Bailey, interviewed by Jan Bolwell, 1991, OHist-0164/5, side 4, 15.2, ATL.
- 55 Smithells was an experienced actor, having twice played the titled role in *Othello*. He was also knowledgeable in music and an accomplished artist. The programme covers of the New Dance Group featured Smithells's drawings, and amongst Smithells's papers can be found sketches for dances.
- 56 Bailey has said that Smithells 'had a really tough time in relation to the other men [involved in Physical Education]. They saw him as a poofster; someone interested in dance, theatre, the arts. He had a very tough time when he first came here.' Bailey, interviewed by Jan Bolwell, 1991, OHist-0164/5, side 4, 15.2–16, ATL.
- 57 L.R. Bedgood, *Health and Physical Education in New Zealand*, Hamilton, 1954, p.18.
- 58 Phillip Smithells, 'The Choices Before Us', paper delivered at the British Commonwealth and International Conference on Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Lincoln Agricultural College, Christchurch, 19–23 January 1974, proceedings, p.139.
- 59 Dennis McEldowney, *Smithells, Philip Ashton, 1910–1977*, DNZB, updated June 2007, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/5s30/1>. Prior to coming to New Zealand, Smithells published an anti-war book for children, *World Without War: A Book for Children*, London, 1939.
- 60 After seeing the first 'demonstration' by the New Dance Group in 1945, the poet Anton Vogt wrote: 'The New Dance Group ... is interested in the dance as a medium of expression for a world in which the machine (unfortunately) determines some of the pattern. But the break with romantic dance traditions was so complete and the intellectual content of the form so interesting, that I must draw attention to both method and subject matter.' Vogt, 'Dance Is Exciting', p.15.
- 61 Programmes from the New Dance Group performances list members; see 1945 programme, MS-001, Box 31, Hocken Library (HL), Dunedin; 1946 programme, MS 90-104, Box 28, HL; 1947 programme, National Dance Archive, 92-02-1/13, ATL.
- 62 Programme for the New Dance Group, 26 October 1945, P.A. Smithells collection, MS1001, HL.
- 63 Graff, pp.7, 35. Graff explains that the Workers' Dance League was an umbrella organisation whose members included the New Dance Group. The League co-ordinated workers' dance groups, 'sponsored concerts ... and facilitated the exchange of ideas' through specialist publications. See Graff, pp.7–17.
- 64 Vogt, 'Dance is Exciting', p.15.
- 65 *Education Gazette*, 1 November 1947, p.228.
- 66 Smithells moved to take up the post of Director of Physical Education at the University of Otago, a position he held until 1974. He was recognised for his achievements when the University of Otago appointed him Professor of Physical Education (the first in the Commonwealth) in 1969; *University of Otago Magazine*, 20 June 2008, p.4.
- 67 Joy Parkin (Peacock), *Dance of the Instant*, Shirley Horrocks, director, Point of View Productions, 2008.
- 68 Programme for the New Dance Group, National Dance Archive of New Zealand, 92-002-1/09, ATL; Bruce Mason, 'First Steps in an Old Art', *New Zealand Listener*, 7 November 1947, p.6.
- 69 For a history of the Royal New Zealand Ballet see Jennifer Shennan, *A Time to Dance: The Royal New Zealand Ballet at 50*, Wellington, 2003.
- 70 Francesca Horsley, 'An Historical Analysis of New Zealand Dance in the Theatre: An Auckland Perspective, 1947–1959', MCPA thesis, The University of Auckland, 2002.
- 71 Cyril Swinson, *Rowena Jackson and Philip Chatfield*, London, 1958.

72 Jan Caryll, born Thomas O'Carroll in Ashburton (1893–1985), claimed to be New Zealand's first male ballet student. He served as a hospital orderly on the SS *Marama* during WWI. O'Carroll left for London in 1921, changed his name and pursued a successful international dance career. The *Dominion* reporting on his performance at the Wellington Opera House stated that O'Carroll was 'a dancer who combines force and virility with an altogether remarkable degree of poise and grace'. *Dominion*, 27 August 1917, p.3.

73 Harold Robinson served with the 36th Battalion in the Pacific during WWII and was a member of the New Zealand Army Concert Party. In 1946 he received a Returned Serviceman's bursary to enable him to study ballet in London. Bryan Ashbridge, celebrated member of the Royal Ballet, served in the Air Force briefly at the end of WWII. See Schultz, Chapter 2.

74 Letter from John Casserley to Marianne Schultz, August 2008.

75 Among them Limbs dancers Bruce Hopkins and Dale Tanner; freelance dancers and choreographers Michael Parmenter, Sean Curham and Guy Ryan; dance educators Alison East and Gaylene Sciascia.

76 Letter from John Casserley to Marianne Schultz, August 2008.

77 Deborah Jowitt, *Jerome Robbins: His Life, His Theater, His Dance*, New York, 2005, p.279.

78 In an interview with Limbs founding member Chris Jannides he explained that, at his first dance class at the Van Zon school in 1976, he was shown films of American modern dance, including the works of Taylor and Nikolais. Jannides explained that 'he had never seen anything like it'. Interview with Chris Jannides conducted by Marianne Schultz, Auckland, 9 May 2002. Tape in possession of author.

79 Gaylene Sciascia had invited various dance practitioners to come to the marae to share ideas, relax and create new works. Interview with Gaylene Sciascia via email, 11 June 2002.

80 Susan Jordan, a New Zealander, had studied dance in the United States and specifically the technique of Martha Graham. See Jan Bolwell, *Susan Jordan: The Making of a New Zealand Choreographer*, Wellington, 1996.

81 Interview with Chris Jannides.

82 *Next Week*, 22 March 1977; Interview with Chris Jannides.

83 Interview with Mark Baldwin conducted by Marianne Schultz, Wellington, 23 April 2001. Tape in possession of author.

84 Francesca Horsley, 'The Muse', *New Zealand Listener*, 4 November 2006, pp.36–39.

85 'In 1967 the National School of Ballet was established in Wellington by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, primarily to prepare students for potential employment by the Royal New Zealand Ballet'. New Zealand School of Dance 40th Anniversary Programme, Wellington, 2007.

86 Merce Cunningham died on 26 July 2009, aged 90.

87 Jowitt, *Time and the Dancing Image*, p.279.

88 Susan Leigh Foster, *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance*, Berkeley, 1986, p.39.

89 Lewis, p.18.

90 Introduction, in Limón, p.xviii.

91 Interview with Mark Baldwin.

92 Steven Connor, *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary*, 2nd edn, Oxford, 1997, p.95.

93 Interview with Mark Baldwin.

94 Interview with Chris Jannides; Peter Brook, *The Empty Space*, London, 1968.

95 For an account of Limbs' performance at Paremoremo maximum-security prison see *O'Clock*, 13 October 1979, p.19.

96 See *Rip It Up*, December 1977, p.12: 'The organizers of The Nambassa Festival call it a "music, crafts and alternatives festival". A smaller stage will be used for children's shows, plays, puppets, magicians and poetry readings. Among those appearing will be Limbs, Red Mole, Ratz Theatrix, poets Garry McCormick, Jon Adams, Jon Benson and others.' For a history of experimental theatre in New Zealand, including Ratz Theatrix, see Murray Edmond, 'Old Comrades of the Future: A History of Experimental Theatre in New Zealand 1962–1982', PhD thesis, The University of Auckland, 1996.

97 *Auckland Star*, 17 November 1981, p.43.

98 *ibid.*

99 Interview with Douglas Wright conducted by Marianne Schultz, Auckland, 13 September 2002. Tape in possession of author.

100 Video footage of this work is held in the Limbs Alan Stuart collection, Ref. F5797, New Zealand Film Archive, Wellington.

101 Alan Petersen, *Unmasking the Masculine: Men and 'Identity' in a Sceptical Age*, London, 1998, p.50.

102 Craig Young, 'Queers versus the New Zealand Christian Right, 1985–1998', in Lynne Alice and Lynne Star, eds, *Queer in Aotearoa New Zealand*, Palmerston North, 2004, p.47.

103 The composer for this work was Don McGlashan. Artist Gretchen Albright provided a large painted backcloth. Costumes were by Elizabeth Whiting.

104 For instance, in Bausch's 1980 *Arien*, the dancers, accompanied by a life-like hippopotamus on stage, 'represent social characters instead of performing abstract movements'.

105 *Sunday Times*, 6 March 1988, p.9.

106 I was a member of Limbs at this time and performed in *Now is the Hour*.

107 Interview with Cath Cardiff by Marianne Schultz, Wellington, 3 September 2003. Tape in possession of author.

108 P.A. Smithells collection, MS1001, HL.

109 Limbs, Press Release, 16 July 1979, NZMS 846, series 12/2/2, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries.