



Ballet Magic



The Burklyn Story

Text by William Noble



Ballet

Magic

The Brooklyn Story

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Printed in the United States of America by Queen City Printers Inc., Burlington, Vermont 05401.

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First Edition

Burklyn Ballet Theatre

A Vermont Summer Performing Experience



Dear Friends,

What you are about to read is the story of a dream come true. From the first modest performances in a converted barn with audiences numbering in single figures, Burklyn Ballet Theatre has surpassed my most optimistic goals.

I owe so much to the dedicated master teachers and wonderful dancers who have shown faith and confidence in my belief that dancers can produce wonderful performances in a very short time and that ballet can thrive in the rich Vermont beauty. Over 25 years I have learned that with passion and dedication, talent and commitment, we — the master teachers and dancers — can truly produce ballet magic.

I want to thank so many people for helping to make this dream a reality; unfortunately limited space makes that impossible. I do want to include the master teachers who have shared the responsibility for the training, the many talented dancers who have allowed us to train them and my children, Jamie and Pamela and daughter-in-law Joanne Hallier-Whitehill. I offer you all my deep and sincere gratitude for being part of the dream.

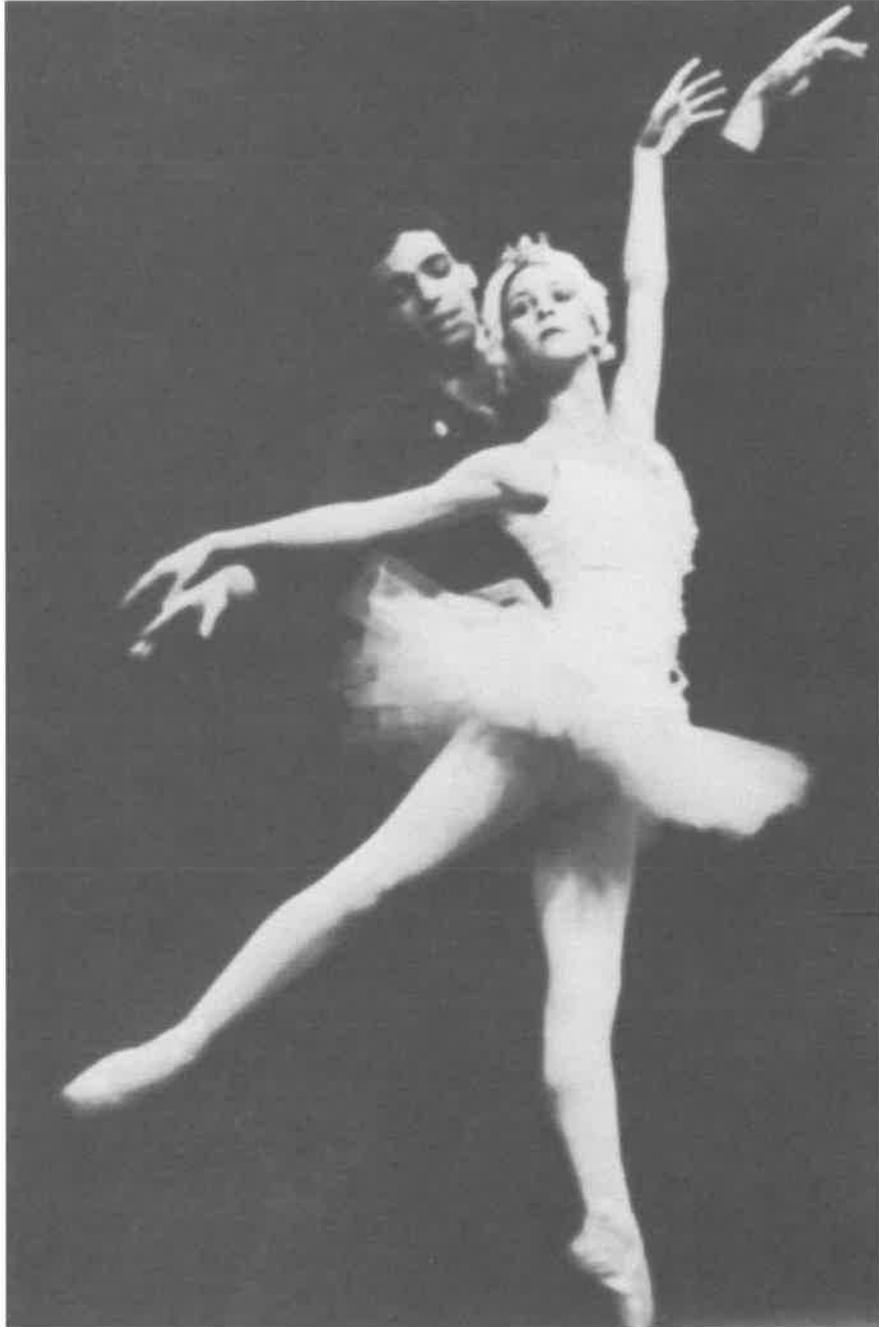
Thank you all....May you enjoy this tribute!

With my warmest wishes,

Angela E. Whitehill
Artistic Director

The Early Years
1977-1981





Jennifer Gould and Paul McNamara in the first "Swan Lake" 1980

It didn't happen exactly as she planned it, but 1976 turned out to be a very good year for Angela Whitehill. The year before, she had moved to East Burke in Vermont's northeast kingdom, intending to open a bed and breakfast in this isolated area of rural charm and little cultural base. She gulped at the sparseness of the land and the expectations of the residents, but she had a dream: one day there would be classical ballet in these remote, breathtaking mountains.

She had been a dancer with Ballet Paris in France for several years. Later, she had developed ballet schools in the U.S. Virgin Islands and New Jersey.

One day, during the summer of that year, 1976, she met Greg Phillips, a young flautist from Boston who was thinking of moving to East Burke. "We talked about working together," Angela remembered. About a mile away from her house was the lovely old Darion Inn which boasted a three star restaurant and a large, well constructed barn. The barn, two-hundred-forty feet long and three stories high, would be a perfect place to offer performances. "We talked to Dick Yerkes, the owner of the Darion Inn, and we proposed Evenings of Music and Dance for the summer of 1977." Yerkes liked the idea, especially when they suggested it as a dinner-theatre combination: meals at the Darion Inn restaurant, performances in the barn on Friday and Saturday evenings.

By summer 1977, things were in place. Angela found five young dancers from local schools and colleges and decided to add herself to the performing company, as well. Her twelve year old son, Jamie Whitehill, ran the lights and ten-year old daughter, Pamela Whitehill, occasionally danced. "We usually opened with a piece of music, then we'd perform a couple of ballets and then we'd close with another piece of music," Angela remembered. "The entire thing would take about one hour and fifteen minutes, and on performance evenings I would handle the box office and then run to get in costume as soon as the door closed." They called themselves the Vermont Seasons Dance Company, and among the ballets they performed were "Tarantella," "Don Q Pas-de-Deux," "Hoe-Down," and "Scottish Fantasy." Angela did the choreography "because I couldn't afford to hire anyone else." Good thing, too — the audiences were sparse, to say the least. "Our average audience was ten people, and once, only one person came to see the show."

But one evening Marianne Hraibi, an elegant, dark-haired woman, introduced herself after the performance. She had grown up in nearby St. Johnsbury, had trained with Martha Graham and had danced with the Paul Taylor Company. She was home for the summer and asked if she could take daily classes in return for teaching an occasional modern class for the small company. "I was delighted," Angela recalled, and Marianne Hraibi



The Burklyn Mansion, barns and Inn were a perfect setting to start a summer program.

became the first master teacher at Burklyn Ballet Theatre.

By the end of the summer, there had been sixteen performances, and never again would classical ballet be unknown in rural northeast Vermont.

About the same time word spread that the Darion Inn, its acreage and barn, as well as a large, beautiful house up the hill, known as the Burklyn Mansion, were being sold to a new-age, consciousness-raising group from California. "Suddenly," Angela recalled, "about twenty additional faces showed up in our final audiences, and then things really began to happen."

One afternoon in the winter of 1977-78 she took in a shivering, seemingly homeless black cat and told the owner of the local general store what she had done. The next day a well-dressed woman appeared at her door and introduced herself as a member of "Burklyn Enterprises," the California group that had bought the Darion Inn and

Burklyn Mansion. "I understand you've found our cat, Manchester," the woman said after Angela had invited her in for tea. On a table were ballet photos, and the woman said she had heard Angela was a dancer. "Actually, I want to start a ballet company here," Angela said, and the woman mentioned that her boss, Marshall Thurber, might want to speak with her. Burklyn Enterprises, she went on, was looking to seed new businesses with start-up money, and a ballet program might be appealing.

A few days later, Angela met with Marshall Thurber. "We talked for five hours," she remembered, "and I went into every detail of what I wanted to do, and I gave him a projected budget. Not long after that he agreed to fund us for the 1978 summer season, and he and I decided to call the program 'Burklyn Ballet Theatre.'"

Angela made two important decisions after this: first, she decided to stop dancing and devote

her energies to building the company and its repertoire; second, she embarked on her first audition tour, seeking students from a variety of schools and programs for the new season. In all, she held ten auditions from Brattleboro, Vermont to Atlanta, Georgia to New York City to Boston to Dayton, Ohio. She divided the season into two sessions of four weeks each (though the first session was canceled when only one dancer signed up) and got in contact with several professional dancers to come as master teachers. One of the first was Cherie Noble, formerly a principle dancer with the Pennsylvania Ballet and whom she had known through the regional ballet movement. Cherie suggested she bring along an old friend, Alexander Bennett, who had performed with the Royal Ballet and had partnered Margot Fonteyn. Bennett, who has not missed a summer Burklyn season since this time, recalled his first meeting with Angela:

“I arrived in the middle of the night with Cherie Noble after a long drive from Philadelphia, and Angela met us. She was an attractive English lady in her thirties with shoulder length hair, but I was so tired I gave a quick hello and went to bed. The next morning I was scheduled to teach class, and a young lady in tights and leotard with hair in a bun stood there smiling. ‘Do you know where Angela is?’ I asked. The lady grinned. ‘I’m Angela,’ she said, and I couldn’t believe the transformation from the night before.”

That same year, 1978, brought David Howard, formerly with the Royal Ballet. Howard, an internationally acclaimed master teacher, had known Angela since their school days in London. “I recall the first time I was at Burklyn,” he said, “there were only ten students in class, we rehearsed in a huge barn, and she had me staying in beautiful Burklyn Mansion, a unique experience, to be sure.” But the show did go on, “even though



Hoe Down at Burke Mountain



... and on stage in the barn theatre

there were only about five people in the audience.” Howard remembered, especially, one detail which hasn’t deviated from that time: “Angela was educating the people about ballet, and she dressed to go on stage as if she was at the Met.”

With the arrival of accomplished master teachers, Angela decided to broaden the Burklyn repertoire, and 1978 saw performances of “Boardwalk,” “Pacabel,” “Chiclets” and the “Black Swan pas-de-deux” from *Swan Lake*. Other master teachers included William Scott from Dance Theatre of Harlem and Ruth Ambrose from the Boston Conservatory who set her “Waltz of the Hours” on the small Burklyn company.

Among the students were three who would distinguish themselves in the world of performing. One was a Vermonter, Ron Benson, who finished up dancing the following year with the Gilles Fontaine Company in New York City and was the first Burklyn student for whom Angela obtained a ballet position. Another was Eric Yetter, now the Artistic Director of the Peoria (Illinois) Ballet, and the third was John Dux, a theatre major from

nearby Lyndon State College who would eventually end up in Hollywood.

The following year things really picked up. Burklyn Enterprises continued funding the program, and Angela sought to expand. She held auditions in nineteen cities, almost double the amount from the prior year, and she offered, as before, two four-week sessions. In 1979, however, there would be enough students — 20 in the first session, 19 in the second session — so the entire eight weeks would be filled. Master teachers would continue to be housed in the Burklyn Mansion and the dancers in the Burklyn ski barn. Meals were taken in the Creamery Restaurant at the Darion Inn, but the Burklyn program did not have the place to itself. Burklyn Enterprises had created the Burklyn Business School, and about 50 people from all over the world came for six weeks to develop special business skills taught by the Burklyn Enterprises people. They, too, had their meals in the Creamery Restaurant, and Angela was delighted. “Our dancers became exposed to so many interesting people,” she said,



We bought pretty nightgowns for the first “Graduation Ball”



"Freedom for the End of Time"

"and we had a built-in audience for our performances. It was really win-win."

Among the dancers at Burklyn that summer were Susie Gaylord from Princeton, New Jersey, Lisa Perei from Burlington, Vermont (who would eventually dance with American Repertory Theatre), Janet Warner Ashley, a mime teacher, Mary Davidson from Atlanta, Georgia, Pam Clark from Utica, New York, Jill Freeman from Ohio, Shawn Maynard who eventually danced with the Hartford and Boston Ballets and Cydney Spahn who would dance with the Pennsylvania Ballet.

Alexander Bennett was back that summer, too, and he restaged Andre Howard's "Death and a Maiden," a piece that would be a favorite through the years. Also that summer, Jill Donaldson, a young dancer from Burlington set "Summer Dance," and it proved to be the first step in what is now a Burklyn tradition that encourages young dancers to set and choreograph a ballet at Burklyn.

One student who has retained her Burklyn contacts from that time is Connecticut's Diane Vivona. She was only fourteen during the summer of 1979, but she had a beautiful ballet body, and she was focused on a ballet career. "I'd saved up money and I came to Burklyn because of an ad in

Dance Magazine," she recalled. "I'd sent in photos to Angela, and when I arrived, I was put in a lower class. It really upset me!" But she looked around and realized she didn't know classical repertoire. "There were students there from the Atlanta Ballet, from the Pittsburgh Ballet, and I got them to teach me some of the classical repertoire. I made friends with a young boy from Tennessee, and he taught me the peasant pas-de-deux from 'Giselle.' I was supposed to stay only two weeks, but Angela gave me a scholarship for the rest of time." One of the master teachers was Sally Brayley Bliss, Artistic Director of Joffrey Ballet II, and she took one look at Diane dancing Dawn in "Coppelia" and said to Angela: "I've got to snap her up before Ballanchine sees her." She offered Diane a spot in the Joffrey School, but Diane wanted a more developed education and went off to St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire where she could also dance regularly. "I had so much exposure to things I hadn't known much about," Diane recalled. "My life shifted after that summer because I realized I could make a career out of dance . . . and it's been my life ever since."

Midway through the season, however, things changed radically for Angela and Burklyn Ballet Theatre. Marshall Thurber closed down the Burklyn Business School, and Angela realized that

Burklyn Enterprises, the source of her funding, was in deep financial trouble. "I went to talk to Marshall," she said, "and he admitted things were bad. 'You're on your own now,' he said, there would be no more funding, though we could continue to use the Darion Inn for meals and the barn for rehearsals and performances." Angela still had a four week session to get through and that meant hiring cleaning staff, a cook and chef, receptionist and secretary, as well as paying the salaries of her master teachers. "Fortunately, I had about ten thousand dollars in uncashed checks from students, and that's what saw us through those next four weeks." Marshall Thurber had given her permission to use the Burklyn name from that point forward, but now she was truly on her own.

What Angela didn't know was that Marianne Hraibi, her modern teacher, had taken it upon herself, once the demise of Burklyn Enterprises was known, to search for a new site for the program. She contacted a relative, Bertha Kourey, who was an art teacher at nearby Lyndon Institute, a boarding school with dorms and a theatre, about five miles from East Burke. Both Marianne and Bertha saw great value for the people and the cultural landscape of Vermont's Northeast Kingdom in the continued life of Burklyn Ballet Theatre. They went to the Board of Directors of Lyndon Institute and proposed offer-

ing a home for the Burklyn program that following summer. "I did not know this was being done," Angela said, "and on the evening of our last performance, when I had no idea where we would be the following year, Marianne Hraibi came to me and said Lyndon Institute would be available for us. It was like a miracle!"

Reality soon set in, however, because while she may have a venue for the program, Angela had no money for promotion and advertising, her audition tour and general program set up. So she went to Vermont JobStart, a state organization that would loan money at low rates to business start-ups, provided there would be job creation in rural, underdeveloped areas. Angela proposed that the Burklyn program would keep the Lyndon Institute food staff working throughout the summer, instead of being laid off as they usually were. "In December, 1979, we were approved for an eight thousand dollar loan, and it was a cliff hanger! I had already contracted for ads in *Dance Magazine* for the 1980 season, even though I didn't know how I would pay for them!"

Now the Burklyn program was in its fourth year, and it had survived despite a loss of funding and dance venue. With its new location at Lyndon Institute and a new decade beckoning, the future seemed bright again. Angela enlarged the audition tour, traveling to Philadelphia and to the



*"Pacabel" with Kathy Hoffman,
Pamela Whitehill and Joyce Zehr*



*The first year dancers on the dormitory fire escape and with Mr. Bennett at the lake.
We all did everything together!*



Northeast and Southeast Regional Ballet Festivals in addition to the — now — usual audition sites. She decided to reduce the length of the program to six weeks from eight weeks, though there still would be two sessions, now only three weeks in length. “I did that,” she recalled, “because Burklyn Enterprises wasn’t there to back me up, and I didn’t want to get myself too far out on a limb.” Thirty five students showed up for each of two sessions, and Angela wanted to move the company repertoire up a step. “We decided to do ‘Swan Lake, Act II,’ and Alexander Bennett staged it for us.” But a glitch developed when thirteen swans appeared on stage for dress rehearsal. The choreography only called for twelve swans, and Angela scratched her head. “One girl spoke up and said she had asked Mr. Bennett if she could perform too, and he had said yes. Only he hadn’t told anyone about it. Now we had one-too-many swans, but we weren’t going to break this young girl’s heart by removing her, so after dress rehearsal, I spent several early morning hours, making her a

swan costume.” Angela laughed as she remembered. “The only problem was that we ran out of material so her swan tutu came out shorter than the others.”

Diane Vivona came back that summer and danced as one of the corps of swans. Performing the role of Odette, the swan queen, was Jennifer Gould who eventually joined the company of *Phantom of the Opera*. Angela, no longer dancing now, decided to choreograph Eric Coates’ “London Suite” for the entire company on the July Fourth celebration. Angela knew the music carried overtones of American honor, but with her classical music background she had no idea of its full patriotic/military appeal. As she went about her choreography, she learned that the music was the anthem of the United States Air Force (“*Off we go, into the wild blue yonder...*”). Son Jamie Whitehill, acting as production manager, arranged to use a huge American flag for the finale. “The flag slowly unfurled at the back of the stage,” she



Rehearsing in the coach barn



Julie Stebbe in Death and the Maiden



Dianna Vivona came back and danced in The corps of "Swan Lake" (2nd from left)

recalled, "and as the dancers moved and the music resonated, the audience jumped and clapped, and we had a really BIG Fourth of July celebration!"

Master teachers that first year at Lyndon Institute included Bill Thompson, balletmaster from Les Grandes Ballets Canadienne in Montreal and Thom Davis, teaching character, from the Mandala Dance Company in Boston. On hand also were Cherie Noble, David Howard and Alexander Bennett, now fixtures with the pro-

gram. "The only major problem we had at Lyndon," Angela recalled, "was that there were no studios or dressing rooms in the theatre. So we took over the gym and strung up lights and partitions and now we had both a studio and dressing rooms."

As the Burklyn program entered its fifth year in 1981, there was a sense of permanence. "We had been through so much," Angela recalled. Now, finally, the program had found a true home.



Thom Davis teaching character dance on stage

Lyndon Institute liked the idea of Burklyn on the campus during the summer, and there were dorms for the dancers, accommodations for the master teachers, rehearsal spaces in the gymnasium, a real, fully-equipped theatre (instead of a large barn) and campus-wide dining hall.

So Angela looked to expand the program. One of the first things she did was to ask Bruce Wells, Artistic Director of Boston Ballet, to come as a master teacher. Wells couldn't make it, but he suggested his balletmaster, Arthur Leeth. Here again, it was a fortuitous event because Arthur Leeth, six feet four inches tall, handle bar moustache and shaven head, has been part of every Burklyn summer since that time. "The dancers took class in the gym," Leeth remembers, "and there was only one level. We stayed in the school dorms, which was a little bit like 'camping out,' and I staged a new ballet at the end of the week. There were about 40 dancers, and the talent level wasn't nearly as high as it is now."

It was Leeth's first experience as a master teacher, yet he knew what he should and shouldn't do. "If you go in as a prima donna, you don't get asked back," he said. "So I went in, did my job and got out" . . . and Angela liked what she saw. "He's been with me ever since," she said.

Angela decided to take a huge step in 1981 by staging a full length "La Sylphide," something she never thought she had the capacity to do. But she had her first School of American Ballet student, Amy Stahl, at Burklyn, and she knew Amy could dance the part of the sylph. She also had an accomplished male dancer, Cliff Wright, whom she cast as James, and the performance went off very well. The company, now with more than forty dancers, had a number of members from southern ballet schools where the training was very good. "The general quality of the dancing started to get much better," Angela recalled. Among the master teachers that year were Sally Brayley Bliss from Joffrey II and Jean Williams



A New Home — Lyndon Institute Dormitories



A New Studio



A New Theatre, complete with the flag lowered

from the Germantown (PA) Dance Company. Cherie Noble choreographed and staged "Since You Asked," and the entire company, for the first time, did the well-known Russian fable, "Peter and the Wolf." This latter ballet would be repeated again and again by Burklyn dancers in the coming years.

Among the students in 1981 was Rebecca (Becky) Metzger from Atlanta, just twelve years old at the time, who danced in "La Sylphide" and who carries the distinction as the first Burklyn dancer to perform as a company member with the New York City Ballet. Another dancer that sum-

mer carried a different sort of distinction. She was from Nebraska, a "lovely dancer" according to Angela, but she had her own agenda. "She wanted to spend time with someone attending a different program on the Lyndon campus, and she broke curfew to do it. I found the window she had climbed from, and I sat and waited for her to return. Imagine her surprise to see me waiting for her at midnight when she climbed back in the window!" The young dancer barely had time to pack her things before she was on her way to the airport and an unhappy ride home. She had become Angela's first major curfew breaker!



*Becky Metzger and Julie Stahl
were the tiniest sylphs*



*Amy Stahl was the Sylph to
Cliff Wright's James*



Diane Vivona and Geoffrey Bove in "Since You Asked"

The Middle Years
1982-1991





Marianne Hraibi's "Abu Ali"

By 1982 it was obvious that Burklyn Ballet Theatre had progressed beyond the uncertainties of the 1970s. With five continual years of operation, master teachers returning year after year, a solid, permanent location for classes and performances and a growing repertoire, the program had achieved one of Angela's basic goals: to bring a steady stream of classical ballet and other forms of dance to a region of Vermont that had rarely experienced it. "Once those first five years were behind us, I knew the program was on solid ground," Angela recalled. "Now we could begin to expand some of the opportunities."

One of the first steps was to start touring to other Vermont locations. In 1982, Angela chose 12 dancers who had come back for a second year to Burklyn, and they performed in the charming college town of Middlebury at the annual Summer Festival on the Green. "It poured with rain that day," Angela remembered, "and we danced under a big tent. The poor dancers, they wore white tutus and got soggy from dressing in a church and running to the tent to perform." But it was a memorable day for two reasons: it was the first time Burklyn toured and there was a glorious sight that greeted them as they drove home. "The sky cleared, and there, above the horizon, was the most gorgeous array of northern lights any of us had ever seen. When we got to the campus, we went to the green, lay down and watched until early in the morning. They were so beautiful!"

In that summer of 1982 the program had two sessions with 65 dancers in total, 39 of them in the second session. For the first time Angela had the dancers perform the prologue to "Sleeping Beauty," a big step, she felt. "We had reached the point where we could do some of the classics because the quality of the dancers had improved so much. I was delighted with it." Alexander Bennett was back that summer, as were David Howard and Cherie Noble. Angela choreographed one of Alexander Bennett's early musical compositions, "Highland Lament," and Marianne Hraibi choreographed a wonderful piece, "Abu Ali," to original music by Lebanese composer, Zhiad Rhabini. Rhabini had allowed the music to be used by Burklyn on the condition that the dancers made no copies, and both Angela and Marianne agreed. "This, too, was a special moment for us," Angela recalled. "When a well-known composer allowed us to perform to his music, I knew we had come a long way."

Others that came to teach or dance at Burklyn that summer included Debbie Blunden, Associate Artistic Director at Dayton (OH) Contemporary Dance Co. who taught jazz, and Sherri Williams, now a principal dancer with the company, who came as a student. Also the Stahl sisters, Amy and Julie, returned for another year and Denise Warner, a soloist from American Ballet Theatre, who came and taught variations. "It was a big, exciting year for us," Angela remembered, "lots of



We didn't have enough tutus so we used chiffon skirts for Denise Warner's staging of "La Bayadere"

new dancers, lots of new choreography and lots of challenges. I think we had moved to a new level."

By 1983 things were really moving along. Robert Barnett, Artistic Director of the Atlanta Ballet came as a Master Teacher for the first time, and Denise Warner returned to stage the well-known classic, "La Bayadere." Up to this point Angela had always felt the ballet too difficult for Burklyn dancers, but the performance went so well that Robert Barnett invited Denise Warner to come to Atlanta and set the ballet on his company. Angela was delighted. "It was another form of recognition," she said, "Now, our dancers could understand where the hard work at Burklyn could eventually lead them."

Another major work appeared on the program that summer. "Les Sylphides," the neoclassical ballet by Russia's Michel Fokine, was set on Burklyn

dancers by Alexander Bennett, and it proved to be an exciting event. "It was the first time we tried it at Burklyn," Bennett recalled, "and I was pleased with how it turned out." Angela followed up this fine work with an original piece of choreography based upon the music of Arensky. She titled it, simply, "Arensky Dances," and she has come to see it as one of the finest pieces of work she has ever done. "Originally, Robert Barnett used the music on the Atlanta Ballet, and when I heard those beautiful, haunting sounds, I felt inspired to produce something special. I've restaged it many times, but I've never changed much of the original choreography."

In addition to the regular master teachers that summer, Jon Rodriquez, Artistic Director of the Dayton (OH) Ballet came to Burklyn, as did Russell Chambers also from the Atlanta Ballet. Chambers had been with the Harkness Ballet and

Frank Dellapolla had to partner many dancers . . .



with Julie Stahl in "Les Sylphides"

he taught the dancers the fabled Harkness warm-up barre (designed to keep dancers injury-free), developed by legendary Rebecca Harkness, a financial angel for ballet in America during the 1960s and 1970s who subsidized many young, talented dancers in New York City's "Harkness House."

Angela continued a second summer of touring, once again arranging for the dancers to appear at Middlebury's Festival on the Green. This time Burklyn performed "Peter and the Wolf" and Angela took 18 dancers along for a Sunday performance. She laughed as she remembered: "That year the sun shone, so we didn't have to worry about soggy costumes, and the dancers were really happy about it." Also returning that summer was Diane Vivona who had last been at Burklyn as a talented fourteen year old in 1979. Now she was getting ready for college, and she had not given up her dancing. "Angela invited me to come back to choreograph," she recalled. "I set a piece to Prokofiev, which Angela titled 'Trio' but I got a little snobby about it, and Angela set me straight. She told me I was acting snobby, and I came back to earth. I know she did it with the best inten-

tions, and she encouraged me to continue with my choreography. Her support gave me such confidence that summer!"

In addition to the master teachers and dancers, Angela also induced Bob Bahr, a professional ballet accompanist with the Memphis (TN) Ballet to come to Burklyn. "He had always wanted to play for us," she said, "and when he came, he brought along 'Chablis,' his golden cocker spaniel who sat right by his feet through class. The kids loved having such a sweet dog around." It was a year that brought some students who would eventually make their mark in the ballet world. Peter Morrison, for instance, just eleven years old in 1983 became a principal at ABT, Frank Dellapolla, the only other male dancer that year, had to perform many lifts and later danced with The San Francisco and Metropolitan Opera Companies, Alexandra Kastrignos who went on to dance with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Karen Lynch who danced with Pacific Northwest Ballet and Rhonda Bondi, a favorite of everyone, from



. . . and with Pamela Whitehill in "Arensky Suite"

Michigan who ended up dancing with Minnesota Dance Theatre all developed successful careers. In understated terms, Angela recalled, "It had been a successful year."

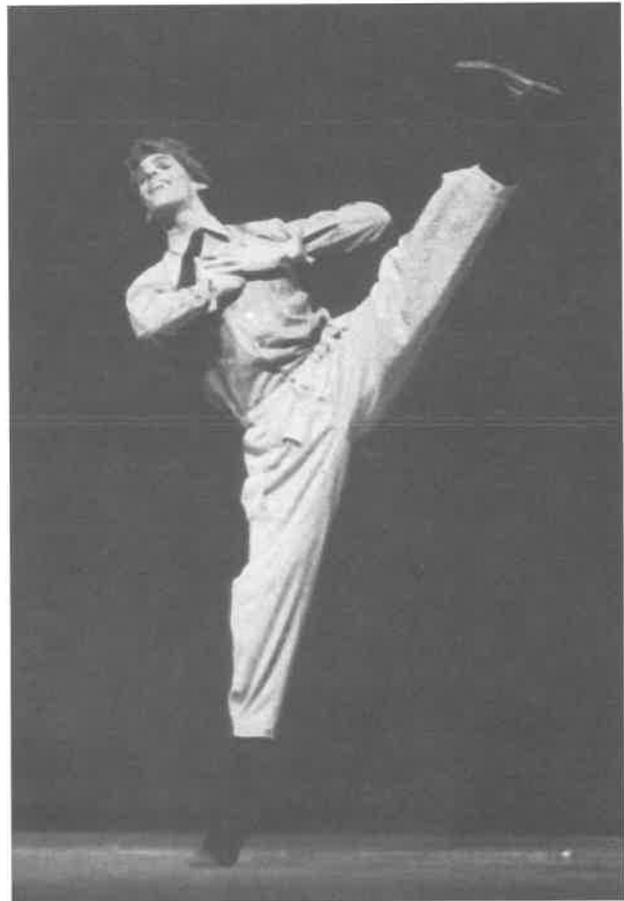
As 1984 dawned, Burklyn experienced a rare event: the greatest number of talented men the program had ever attracted. "We had seven really good male dancers," Angela recalled, and while there had been that many men in prior years, never before had the skill level been so high. It meant that Burklyn could do ballets such as "Raymonda" which required 5 male dancers, and as the summer progressed the weekly program expanded and developed. Among the dancers were Floyd Flynn who went to the Martha Graham company at the end of the summer, thanks to Marianne Hraibi; Frank Dellapolla; Chris Harris who went on to get a degree at the University of Cincinnati and then become a tech-

nical director; David Nash who went to Ballet Met in Columbus, Ohio; Jack Noseworthy who joined the Broadway production of "Cats" after Burklyn and then established himself in Hollywood; Albert Volk who danced the peasant pas-de-deux from "Giselle" during the summer of 1984, the first time it had been performed at Burklyn.

By this time many of the ballet classics were no longer beyond the reach of the Burklyn dancers. Arthur Leeth, now a regular fixture, at Burklyn restaged "La Bayadere" and used Pamela Whitehill, Angela's daughter, in the lead. Pamela had grown up in the ballet world and would eventually dance professionally with several major companies. But in 1984 she was just a young teenager attending the National Academy of Dance in Champagne, Illinois, and this role was a special treat for her. "Sleeping Beauty" and "Swan



"Highland Lament"
with Sara Melli and Geoffrey Bove



Floyd Flynn, a versatile dancer went on to dance with Martha Graham Co.



1984 brought enough men to stage "One" from "A Chorus Line"

Lake" were also performed during the summer, and for the final week of the season Angela brought in Rochelle McReynolds, a well-known jazz teacher from the Boston Conservatory, to stage the finale from "Chorus Line." "With all those men," Angela recalled, "we could really put it together, and the audience just loved it!"

1984 was also the third year that Angela took Burklyn on the road, this time as part of the summer series at the Brandon Inn in Brandon, Vermont. The dancers, once again, performed "Peter and the Wolf," but they also added variations from "Sleeping Beauty," and now the "road" program was multi-level. "It had been a great year for us," Angela remembered, "our program really expanded."

Two major steps in the overall development of the Burklyn program occurred this year: in 1982 Angela had gone to London and had worked with the Royal Ballet Company to learn how to make tutus. Now, she felt confident she could make them for Burklyn, and in 1984 she began to do so, one of the few artistic directors in any company capable of this; secondly, two young professional dancers, David Nash and Susan Stowe offered their services to Burklyn as dormitory counselors. If Angela would provide them free rent, board, all classes and performance opportunities, they would move into the dormitories and act as counselors for the dancers, thereby freeing Angela and her master teachers from this day-to-day responsibility. "It was a perfect arrangement," Angela said. "The counselors were much closer to



"The White Swan pas de deux," Pamela Whitehill and Frank Dellapolla

the dancers' ages, they enjoyed the responsibility we gave them, and they had a totally free summer to work on their dancing. It was definitely win-win."

The following year — 1985 — brought still more changes to the Burklyn program. During the previous winter, 1984-1985, Angela had opened the first Burklyn Winter School in Waitsfield Vermont, near fabled Sugarbush Ski Area. Weekly classes were held with Angela doing all the teaching, and she was able to attract about fifty students, some of whom went on to join the regular Burklyn summer program. "I opened the winter school to expand ballet opportunities in Vermont," Angela said, "but I also wanted to create a permanent Burklyn presence in the state. People who took classes during the winter could

now continue with their training in the summer. We had become year-round."

The summer of 1985 brought some — but not all — of the fine male dancers back, but there was enough talent to perform more of the classics. The dancers performed portions of Petipa's "Don Quixote," and Arthur Leeth, who was still dancing with the Boston Ballet, agreed to go on stage and dance as the Colonel in Lichine's "Graduation Ball," opposite another master teacher, Dena Laska from the Israeli Ballet, who danced as the Headmistress. Denise Warner, now retired from American Ballet Theatre, came back as did Robert Barnett from the Atlanta Ballet. Alexander Bennett also returned, and in a departure from prior years where he focused on classical works, he choreographed "Correlliana," a contemporary ballet. "I found it exciting to do," he said, "it was a challenge for me and the dancers, but I think we did it well."



Arthur Leeth as the Colonel and Dena Laska as the Headmistress danced the mazurka from "A Graduation Ball"



"Corelliana," choreography Alexander Bennett



A full length "Giselle" with Susan Stowe and Timothy Miano . . . the dancers helped the crew paint the sets.

At the end of the summer, however, Angela received unsettling news that would permanently affect the program. "The administrative staff at Lyndon Institute informed me that at the conclusion of summer, 1986, they intended to close all the dormitories at the school. From that point Lyndon would cease to have overnight facilities, and while we were welcome to continue the program there, to use the studios and the theatre, we would have to find accommodations for everyone off campus." Angela knew it would be an impossible task; the town of Lyndonville, charming and picturesque, was not large enough to hold 70-75 dancers and master teachers, and the program would not hold together if people were to be scattered over the landscape. "One of our greatest strengths," she said, "was the 'company' nature of what we were doing; we ate together, we walked together, we slept in the same place, we traveled together. And we danced together. Break that apart, and everything else falls."

And so as the 1985 summer ended, Angela knew she had little more than a year to find a new home for Burklyn. It would prove an exhausting task.

Angela continued with the Burklyn winter school, alternately teaching and searching for a new site for the summer program. She began contacting schools, colleges and universities throughout Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine, any place, it seems, that had an acceptable theatre. "My first requirement," Angela recalled, "was the theatre. Burklyn had made its reputation as a 'performing' program, and we needed a full time theatre for that to continue." Also on the agenda, of course, were adequate dormitory spaces, dining facilities, studio space, recreational opportunities and a quiet, peaceful and safe environment. "Many places I saw had most of what I was looking for, but few could meet all of my requirements. I must have looked at more than forty

locations, and as the months went on I despaired of finding what I was looking for.”

Then, one day in April, 1986 she was driving east on Vermont’s Interstate Route 91, enroute from Burlington to the winter school classes in Waitsfield. She had just had an unsatisfying discussion with officials at the University of Vermont over relocating Burklyn there. “Their summer program set-up really didn’t offer the kind of privacy and security I was looking for, nor did they have a proscenium theatre” she remembered. “They had so many things going on each summer that I felt we could have become an after-thought to them.” As she reached Waterbury where she would normally head south to Waitsfield, she suddenly remembered that just forty-five minutes north was another Vermont institution — Johnson State College — and she knew there was a theatre there. Fortunately, she had some time to

spare, so she turned north, and within an hour she was marveling at the quiet, pristine beauty that Johnson could offer. “It was a small town — which I was looking for, it was a small campus — which I was looking for, it offered beautiful surroundings — which I was looking for, and I could see right away the dancers could feel safe and secure here.” After inspecting the theatre, which she pronounced superior to any she had seen in Vermont, Angela knew she had found a new home for Burklyn. She immediately began discussions with the Johnson State College administration, and by the time the Burklyn program got underway in 1986, she had a place to go the following year.

In the meantime, she was readying Burklyn for the 1986 summer season, the final one at Lyndon Institute. It happened to be the year of the horrific nuclear accident in Chernobyl, Russia,



The Johnson State College campus had everything including a gorgeous setting.

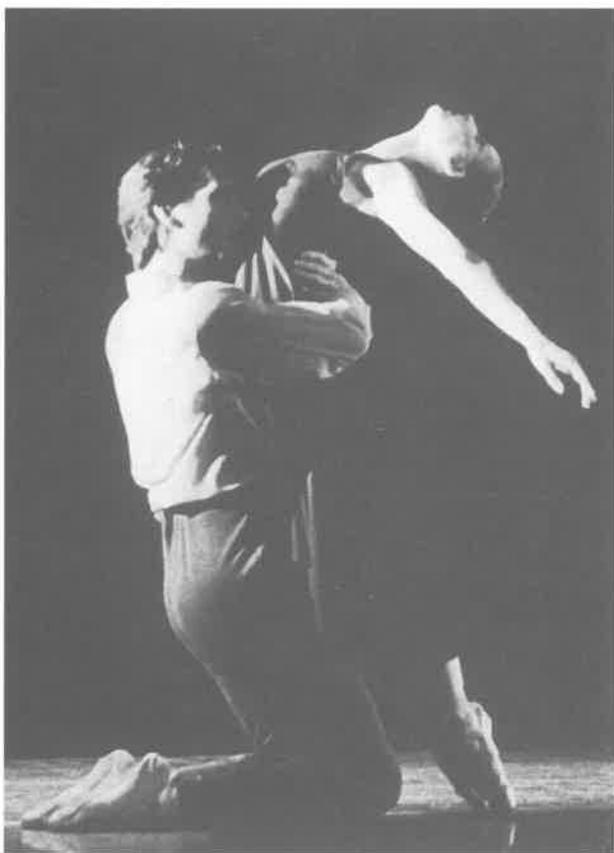


Burklyn was named the official school of Vermont Ballet Theatre, giving work to some of the Burklyn dancers: Mary Ellen Vickery, Pamela Whitehill, Melissa Sondrini and Susan Stowe dance with Colin Day, Karl Von Germaten and David Nash.



"So," he sighed, "I performed . . ." Arthur Leeth and Emily Wallace in the final pose of "Raymonda"

and suddenly, parents who were planning to send their young American dancers to the International Ballet Competition in Varna, Bulgaria that summer were having second thoughts. Possible exposure to radiation across eastern Europe convinced many to stay at home, and Burklyn became a viable alternative. Angela smiled as she remembered: "We were full for the first time ever." Dena Laska now retired from the Israeli Ballet returned as a master teacher and staged "Surprise Symphony," a ballet spoof. In the middle of the performance a dancer mimed losing a contact lense and brought everything on stage to a halt as a frantic search went on... Angela recalled that the dancers enjoyed this departure from usual business: "It gave them all a chance to laugh at themselves." In keeping with the light-hearted theme, Burklyn also performed "Les Patineurs," a comedy ballet staged by Denise Warner. Angela borrowed costumes from Connecticut's Nutmeg Ballet for this, and it was a landmark of sorts. "It was the first time we had ever borrowed from another company, and it meant we had reached a point where we could be relied upon to return the costumes when we finished with them." Angela,

*"Eternal Love"*

also, was able to lure Steven Davis, a professional accompanist from the Atlanta Ballet, and he played for many of the performances as well as all classes. It was one of the few occasions in

Burklyn's history where live music accompanied the performances week after week.

Several other noteworthy events occurred during this final summer at Lyndon Institute. Burklyn was named the "official" school of Vermont Ballet Theatre, a professional company organized by Angela and using professional dancers who were on layoff. Vermont Ballet Theatre performed throughout the state of Vermont, often using Burklyn dancers in supporting roles in the next few years. It was another step up for the Burklyn program. Additionally, Angela choreographed a ballet dealing with various forms of love — "4 plus 2" — that she considers among her best works. And Arthur Leeth, just retired from dancing with the Boston Ballet, returned for another season. Angela wanted him to set the Third Act of "Raymonda," but they both realized there were only four good male dancers in the program that summer, and they needed five. "So," Leeth sighed, "I performed in it. I said I'd do it if I didn't have to do a solo or do the men's steps in the coda. Angela agreed, so I gave the coda to the boys, and I did the entrance, the pas de deux and the final poses. That was my dancer's swan song at Burklyn."

That summer also saw the glimmerings of a new development in the Burklyn program — opportunities for young dancers to choreograph.

*"Mature Love"*



The new theatre gave the production department opportunities to design new lighting effects.

Leigh Witchell from New York, in his second year at Burklyn, choreographed “Scherzo” from “Mid-Summer’s Night’s Dream,” and it was an auspicious start for him. He went on to choreograph for the Lexington (KY) Ballet and Atlanta Ballet, and in 2001 he was awarded a Guggenheim Foundation Grant for his choreography.

“In many ways it had been a bittersweet year for us,” Angela remembered. “We did some ballets we’d never done before, we were completely full for the first time, and we started showcasing choreographers.... but we also had to say good-bye to our friends at Lyndon Institute, and an important part of our early ballet life was now behind us.”

But 1987 also brought a new beginning. From this point forward Burklyn would be in residence at Johnson State College every summer. There would now be fifteen years of Burklyn programs

to come, and with this permanent location, Angela and Burklyn Ballet Theatre would grow and expand as no one could have envisaged. For the first time in 1987, Angela decided to take the Burklyn auditions beyond the middle west, into Denver and California, especially Los Angeles and San Carlos, near San Francisco. The dividends were immediate and Angela was delighted: “we received applications from dancers we would never have been able to reach in prior years. Now the entire country knew about us.”

Another Burklyn first occurred in 1987. Angela had met Kennet Oberly and his wife Annette who had returned to America from Denmark where they had learned the Bournonville syllabus, and they were delighted to come to Burklyn as master teachers. What made it especially significant was that the Bournonville syllabus — using a lot of petite batterie — rarely was performed outside Denmark, and now

Burklyn could boast it for the summer. Oberly set two Bournonville ballets on the Burklyn dancers: "Konservatoriate" and "Festival of Albano," and the dancers found the new syllabus exciting and challenging. In addition to the Bournonville choreography, the Burklyn dancers had other varied exposure: Marianne Hraibi returned and set a modern piece, "Vivaldi Dances," and Lorraine Neal returned to teach jazz and choreograph "Cool" from "West Side Story."

That spring, Vermont Ballet Theatre performed a six week season in Vermont, and when it was over, some of the professional dancers Angela had hired — Teresina Goheen, Frank Affronte, Annette Maynard — stayed and worked through the summer as counselors for the Burklyn program. "This really changed the level of performances," Angela recalled. "Now the Burklyn students had these professional dancers to look up to and to work towards a definite goal. It made a great difference for us."

Angela continued her choreography that summer, producing a double pas-de-deux, "Twins From a Time Gone By," which she has since repeated once. The program continued with two three-week sessions, and there were 55 dancers in residence each session, including counselors. For the first summer at Johnson, Angela was pleased with results. "We had enough room on the campus for studios (though everything was in under-sized McClelland Hall), the dormitories were comfortable, the dining hall was adequate, and we averaged 40-50 people in the audience each week. In ten years we'd come a long way from the cow barn in East Burke and an audience you could count on one hand!"

By the spring of 1988 there was no getting away from the fact that Burklyn had grown in stature and reputation. Angela was getting more and more applications from students in far away places, and by now she had firmly committed herself to a nation-wide audition tour each winter.



"Vivaldi Dances"

From the east coast to California and Washington and from Vermont to Florida and Texas she now set out each January, taking up to six weeks and seeing hundreds of young dancers in schools and programs throughout America. But Burklyn's reputation in Vermont was also growing, partly because the winter school had now established a full-time studio in Burlington, Vermont's largest city and partly because Vermont Ballet Theatre, the professional company, was continuing to perform throughout the state and had concluded a successful spring season. Because Burklyn was the "official" school of Vermont Ballet Theatre, whatever kudos came to the professional company eventually filtered down, and the better Vermont Ballet Theatre became known, the better Burklyn did, also. It enabled Angela to put together a varied and exciting program for summer, 1988.

In addition to Alexander Bennett, David Howard, Arthur Leeth and Cherie Noble, other master teachers that summer included Rochelle Zide-Booth, a former Joffrey Ballet dancer who had also danced and taught at the Netherlands Dance Theatre in Holland. "An inspiring teacher," Angela recalled, and "the students loved her." Also

at Burklyn was Manon Larin from Les Grandes Ballets Canadiennes who adapted Beijart's "Firebird" and set it on the Burklyn dancers and accompanist Oleg Moston, a Russian, who had been working in David Howard's studio in New York. "We had quite a line-up of talented people that summer," Angela recalled, "we also did Arthur Leeth's original choreography, 'Surprise Waltz,' to music by Kermess and a Bournonville ballet, 'Flower Festival' which went over very well." Not to be outdone, Alexander Bennett convinced Angela to redo a full-length "La Sylphide," and he staged it, using Melinda Stubbe, who had just finished her first year as an apprentice with the Eugene (OR) Ballet, as the Sylph.

Among the counselors that summer was Emily Wallace now dancing with the Des Moines (IA) Ballet, and she took the role of the duck when Burklyn performed "Peter and the Wolf." Lee Bell from the Marin County Ballet(CA) was also a counselor, and he danced opposite Angela's daughter, Pamela Whitehill, in the "Corsair" pas-de-deux. Angela, herself, choreographed a pas-de-deux, "A Deux," a monument to total love involvement. Leigh Witchell was back that sum-



"Surprise Waltz," and the dancers loved to dance it!

mer, and in keeping with Burklyn's developing choreographic opportunities, he put together a new ballet, "Forest" which he called a "fun" ballet. It was to the music of C.P.E. Bach, and according to Angela it "made everyone feel good."

As the second year at Johnson drew to a close Angela could count on the continued success of the program, though the McClelland Building facilities were limiting. Arthur Leeth put it in perspective: "when we first came to Johnson, the entire program, including all the studios, was at McClelland. It was small and as we broke the classes into two levels, it was difficult to find adequate space." Then he added, "as if that wasn't enough, we had to go up that hill to dinner, theatre rehearsals and the dormitories at the end of class each day. It made it tough."

Angela was also concerned about the space, but she recognized that Burklyn would have to make do with what Johnson had available until a campus-wide reassessment of building space was completed. Perhaps then, she hoped, there might be some additional building space for Burklyn to use. "But I kept telling myself that in spite of the limitations with McClelland, the Burklyn program had never had it so good, and we should be pleased with what we had."

By 1989 Burklyn had grown to 60 dancers in each of two sessions, and had attracted some impressive master teachers in addition to the regulars such as Alexander Bennett, David Howard, Arthur Leeth and Cherie Noble. This was the year that Noble Barker, formerly a dancer with the Pennsylvania, Hartford (CT) and Cincinnati Ballets, came. He was now on the dance faculty at Yale University and had been Joanne Whitehill (then Joanne Hallier), Angela's daughter-in-law's, teacher. Also scheduled to come was Kevin McKenzie, a principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre (and now Artistic Director of ABT). McKenzie was from Vermont originally, and he was one of a handful of Vermont dancers who have become successful in ballet. But shortly before he was to come, he got sick, and he called

Angela: "Let me send someone else," he said, "someone really good." True to his word, the classically elegant Martine Van Hamel, another ABT principal dancer, came in his place. "The Burklyn dancers were so excited to be working with her," Angela recalled.

There were also two rising young choreographers on the scene that year: Leigh Witchell from New York and Emily Aguerre from California. Each week they choreographed new, solid work on the Burklyn dancers, and the idea that Burklyn could be a place for both dancers AND choreographers each year took hold. "From this point on," Angela said, "choreography, especially by young, rising choreographers, became an important part of the Burklyn program."

The summer of 1989 also saw the finest group of young dancers ever from Vermont. Because of the winter school in Burlington, Angela had been able to attract and train a significant number of Vermonters, and the results were now showing at Burklyn where some of them came and continued their training. Among them included Anna Nuse, who went on to dance with the Bella Lewitski Company, Rebecca Rosenberg, who eventually danced with American Repertory Ballet, Nadine Budbill and Françoise Labbé. "It made me feel good to have these Vermont dancers at Burklyn," Angela recalled, "after all, the program was situated in Vermont and played to Vermont audiences, why shouldn't there be Vermont dancers here, too?"

Among the counselors that year was Tong Wang, a young, well-trained Chinese dancer who had just come to the United States (and who is now a principal dancer with Ballet West). Tong danced the pas-de-deux from "La Bayadere," as well as "Shostakovich," a contemporary work to the music of Dimitri Shostakovich . . . set by Joseph Carow, Assistant Artistic Director of the New Jersey Ballet. For Tong it was a significant challenge because he had never before danced anything contemporary. But the modern theme continued that summer as Marianne Hraibi offered her "Concert A," an intense work with the dancers



Pamela Whitehill as Juliet, Brian Neubauer as Romeo in "Romeo & Juliet"

in bright red leotards. It was so successful that Burklyn continued with it each year into the 1990s.

A sad note occurred that summer as Angela's daughter, Pamela Whitehill who had been dancing since 1978 and professionally since 1986 injured her knee severely enough that she would require surgery. She recovered sufficiently to return for one summer — 1992 — but after that she never danced professionally again. On the other hand Pamela was able to rejoin the Burklyn

program in a teaching capacity, and Angela was pleased with that.

As the decade of the 1990s opened, Burklyn had settled into two three-week sessions with an option for those who wanted to come for two, four or six weeks. Approximately 60 dancers (including counselors) were on campus for each session, and all of the regular master teachers returned. One new face was Judith Karstens, a soloist from Les Grandes Ballets Canadiennes who set a series of works on the Burklyn dancers. The highlight of the summer was a mock wedding

devised by Angela and the dancers because everyone wanted a "different" type of party one Sunday afternoon. "Steven Jackson, one of our counselors, was the minister," Angela recalled, "Emily Wallace from the Des Moines Ballet was the bride, Tong Wang was the groom and Leigh Witchell was the best man. Then, Emily Aguerre decided she would be mother-of-the-groom and she found a Japanese kimono to wear, even though her so-called "son" was Chinese. I was mother-of-the-bride and Arthur Leeth was father-of-the-bride and Rebecca Rosenberg and Amy Rogers were the bridesmaids. It was an hilarious experience, and the dancers loved it, especially when we went through a mock wedding ceremony at Lower Pond on the Johnson campus, and the bride and groom looked lovingly into one another's eyes and promised faithfully... they would never mess up a press lift... again!"

At the end of that summer another first occurred: Angela took 12 Burklyn dancers to the resort at Mount Snow, Vermont and had them join Vermont Ballet Theatre, which was in a two-week residency there. All rehearsals and classes were open to the public, and the program, which was performed under a tent, included two new works by Leigh Witchell, Angela's "A Deux," "Death and the Maiden," staged by Alexander Bennett, "Peter and the Wolf," the Black Swan pas-de-deux and Marianne Hraibi's "Concert A." It was a rousing success, and the Burklyn dancers who had their summers extended and enriched by dancing with Vermont Ballet Theatre were ecstatic. For Angela, it was even more enlightening. "I realized," she said, "that the Burklyn summer needn't come to an end in early August." Within five years that thought would translate into an annual reality.



Tong Wang had just arrived from China

In 1991 two new master teachers came to Burklyn. There was Paul Estabrook from David Howard's New York studio, and he set "Brandenburg Concerto" which really stretched the dancers, and Christine Aitken, a dancer and teacher from the Royal Ballet in London who staged the "Raymonda" pas-de-deux and insisted Burklyn provide necklaces, earrings, bracelets and tiaras for each of the dancers ("She almost drove me crazy," Angela recalled). Also at Burklyn for the first time was Don Vollema, an accompanist from Arizona, who is now principal accompanist at Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle. Angela had wanted him to come to Burklyn for several years, and when he finally did, he returned again and again. "He was so good with the kids," Angela remembered.

On stage that year Joe Carow, now Chair of the Dance Department at East Carolina,

University, Greenville, NC, reset David Lachine's "Graduation Ball," which was a major coup for Burklyn. Normally, the ballet can't be performed without special permission from Lichine's widow, but Carow had been "regisseur" of American Ballet Theatre where the ballet was archived, and he had received special permission to stage it. Steven Jackson danced the role of Headmistress, and Laurel Skousen, who eventually became a principal with the Cleveland Ballet, danced the pas-de-deux with Kevin Frady. Laurel who danced with Michigan Ballet Theatre near Detroit so impressed Angela with her training that in succeeding years Angela added Detroit to her audition schedule. "I've had some marvelous dancers from there," Angela said, "and much of the credit goes to Cornelia Sampson, artistic director of Michigan Ballet Theatre."



"Graduation Ball" gave dancers a chance to shine. Joanne Whitehill as "Pigtails"

By this time Burklyn was up to 65 dancers each session, including counselors, and the repertoire was growing. Pamela Whitehill, Angela's daughter returned from injury and staged her first piece of choreography: the fairies from "Sleeping Beauty." Old friend Cherie Noble returned for another year and staged two sections of her full-length "Cinderella": the pas-de-deux and "The Seasons." On the final weekend, Lorraine Neal, who had been teaching jazz at Burklyn for 5 years, set "One" from "Chorus Line." The dancers loved

doing it, and in Angela's words, it "brought down the house!"

In a final reflection on what is now Burklyn's middle years, 1982-1991, Angela could say, "we came of age during this time, we grew and changed and developed from an annual 'dance program' to a true 'dance experience' where dancers and master teachers and choreographers and I blended into a single whole which we now call simply — Burklyn!"

The Later Years
1992-2001





Story ballets in Scotland

*In the 90's the programs
grew to include . . .*



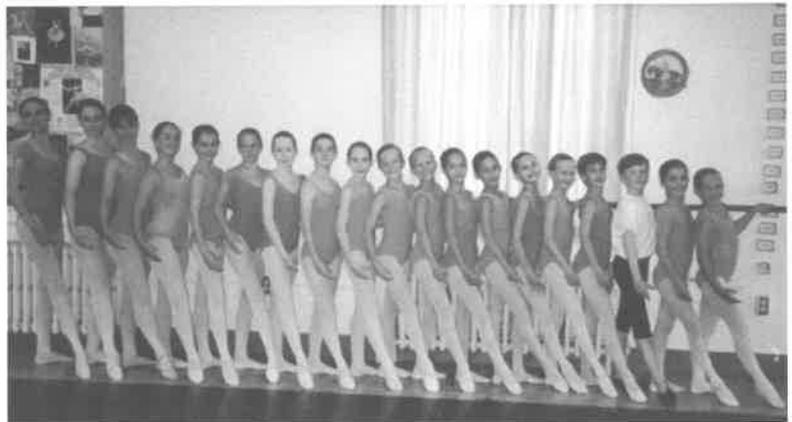
The Children's Program



The Edinburgh Connection



The Choreographic Project — "Three and One"



The Intermediate Program

By 1992 Burklyn had become well-established on the Johnson College landscape. Angela's coast-to-coast auditions were producing a steady stream of dancers from around the country, and recognition was also forthcoming from within Vermont. One day in 1992 Angela received a phone call from Vermont Public Television. "They wanted to do a documentary on Burklyn for their 'Crossroads' series," she recalled. "The program highlighted significant events and performers in the state, and they thought we were an ideal subject." Within weeks details were ironed out, a script was developed and production commenced. The longtime host and producer of 'Crossroads,' Enzo Maieo, narrated the thirty minute show. It opened with Angela taking the viewer on a tour of the Burklyn Mansion in East Burke and then cutting to the studios at Johnson for footage of class and rehearsals. "They got some beautiful shots of the dancers, and I finally had a chance to show a large number of people what we were doing at Burklyn. It was a wonderful experience for me, for the dancers and for Burklyn."

After the show aired, compliments and comments poured into the Burklyn offices, and Angela was struck by a single thought: "Now," she said, "we were being taken seriously inside as well as outside Vermont, and it was about time!"

In addition to regulars such as Alexander Bennett, Cherie Noble and David Howard, mas-

ter teachers in 1992 included Joseph Carow, Kennet Oberly and Carol Rioux who had been a master teacher for the Fokine Ballet Camp in Massachusetts some years before and now running her own company in New York City. The Burklyn dancers performed a Bournonville ballet, "Sunday's Echo," reconstructed by Kennet Oberly who had learned it while in Denmark, and Angela continued her choreographic program by having two young choreographers in residence: Lee Witchell and Emily Aguerre who turned out "a lot of stuff." One of Emily's pieces, "Stop Thief!" was set on Shannon Volk, a young Burklyn dancer from New York who is now with American Ballet Theatre, and later in the summer Emily set "Concerto #3" by Rachmaninov. Angela, herself, did some choreography that summer, setting "Little Waltz" to music by Glaznov. One of the dancers in the piece was Lauren Toole, a Burklyn day student and only ten years old at the time. Now she's dancing with the New York City Ballet.

Other students that year included Andrea Bergeman from Long Island (NY), now with the Tulsa (OK) Ballet, Sarah Edery from New York City, now with the Pennsylvania Ballet, Andrea Thompson from West Virginia who went into the Charleston (SC) Ballet, Dereck Townsend, now a principal with the Nevada Ballet Theatre, Hil Anderson who came from the Atlanta Ballet, Vladik Stukalov who went into the Louisville

Ballet and Megan Haas from Ohio who went into the the Cleveland Ballet.

“We had an extraordinary number of fine dancers that summer,” Angela recalled, “and we could — and did — do some of the most demanding classics such as the “Sleeping Beauty — Act III” which Arthur Leeth set and “Les Sylphides” which Alex Bennett set. Our audiences were growing, too, no small thanks to the Vermont Public Television documentary.” By the end of the summer Angela could look back on one of the most successful years — ever — at Burklyn.

As 1993 dawned, Angela made a significant decision about the program, one that continues to this day: in late spring, she closed down the winter school in Burlington after seven years in order to devote herself exclusively to the Burklyn summer program. “It was a sad moment for me,” she recalled, “because I loved working with the young dancers every day, and I was going to miss seeing them so frequently. But it was time for a change, and the summer program was growing so well I needed to spend part of my winters getting ready for the following summer.” What happened was that many of the advanced dancers in the winter



*Aurora and her Prince
Jennie Creer and Peter Meuller*



*1992 was the last time Pamela danced.
“Seulement” choreographed by Angela Whitehill*



It was sad to see them go . . .

school had obtained scholarships at performing arts schools around the country such as St. Paul's in Concord, NH, Harid in Boca Raton FL, Walnut Hill in MA, and Angela was going to have to devote a great deal of time to preparing the next generation of dancers to reach this level. "My first priority was always the summer program," she said, "and I knew I couldn't do both now."

The summer of 1993 followed the pattern set in the prior year, and Burklyn had strong dancers both as counselors and as students. The counselors, mostly young professionals, came from the Charleston (SC) Ballet, Hungarian National Ballet, Tulsa (OK) Ballet, Southern (FL) Ballet Theatre, St. Louis (MO) Ballet and Nevada Dance Theatre. They were joined by the regular master teachers and by Jim Franklin, Associate Artistic Director of the Fort Wayne (IN) Ballet, a high energy dancer with a great feel for jazz. He set several contemporary works on the Burklyn dancers including "Never Had a Friend Like You," which he choreographed. Frank Dellapolla, with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet returned and danced the pas-de-deux in "La Sylphide" and the lead in Angela's special creation "4 plus 2." A most poignant moment occurred when Cherie Noble choreographed a beautiful ballet — "Waterview Bridge" — in memory of her close friend, Ben Hazard, a former Atlanta Ballet dancer and



. . . . they always had fun!



teacher at University of Phoenix (AZ) who had just passed away. "There were tears all around," Angela remembered.

By the end of 1993 Angela had closed the winter school and had given thought to expanding the Burklyn opportunities. Alexander Bennett, her old friend and Burklyn master teacher, had urged her to consider taking a group of Burklyn



Anne Seymour and Kristen Sloane in "Legend of the Enchanted Bird"

dancers to Edinburgh, Scotland to perform as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the largest performing arts festival in the world. "You could do it after Burklyn closes in the summer," he said. "The Fringe starts up in August." So, after the 1993 Burklyn season, Angela went to Edinburgh to see for herself... and fell in love with the city. "It was a beautiful place to perform," she recalled.

Angela decided to do a joint project in 1994 with Bennett who had been raised in Edinburgh, had danced there and knew the city's performing venues. "We chose twenty Burklyn dancers — seventeen students and three counselors — two males, one female — and we would go to Edinburgh in early August, once the Burklyn season in Vermont was finished." They chose to perform as Scottish-American Ballet, a company Bennett had created years before and had previously taken to Edinburgh. They would be performing his "Legend of the Enchanted Bird," and it promised to be an exciting new direction for

Angela and Burklyn Ballet Theatre. Planning for experience in Edinburgh began with the start of the year.

But, first, the 1994 Vermont season at Johnson had to be presented, and here, too, some new faces appeared. There was David Holladay, Director of the School of the Pittsburgh (PA) Ballet who came as a master teacher and was the first director of a summer ballet program, other than Burklyn, to work with the Burklyn students; there was Jonathon Tabbett from Dayton, OH who came as a fourteen year old dancer and quietly choreographed "Moonlight Sonata" with such skill that "everyone was amazed, and we recognized a major choreographic talent in the making;" there was Doreen Caferella, a master teacher from Nashua, NH, who would soon develop her own company, Granite State Ballet (now Northern Ballet Theatre), which has since become home to several Burklyn dancers. In 1994 Burklyn performed two of Doreen Caferella's works: "Variations on Bach" and "For the Fun of It."



The Churchill Theatre

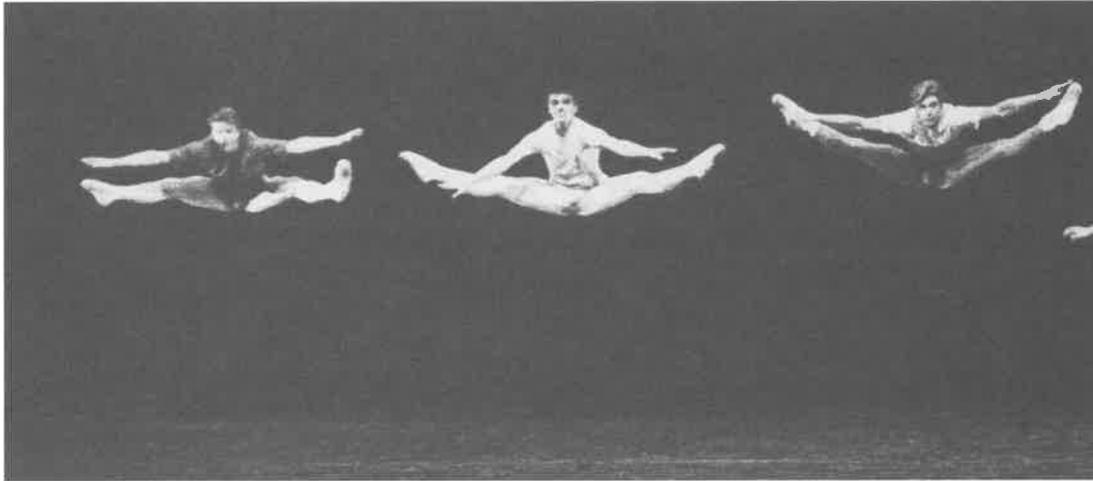
Mathew Keefe returned that year but he came as both a choreographer and a dancer, and Burklyn "did alot of his choreography, including 'Sleep Walkers' and 'Yin.'" Angela also continued her choreography that summer by creating a ballet to music from the opera "Thais," entitled "Meditation," which she had wanted to develop for years and which she set on Danielle Cap, Vladik Stukolav and Rob Royce. And old friend, Joe Carow, from the New Jersey Ballet was back again, this time setting his "Square Roots," a rip-roaring, country western ballet "that brought smiles and shouts from the audience."

Then, suddenly, it was time to go to Edinburgh. "In addition to Alex Bennett's ballet, we decided to do my 'A Deux' and Petipa's 'Paquita.' We made new costumes for everything, including thirteen new tutus, and we went as a group from Boston directly to Edinburgh. Fortunately, we were able to get the Churchill Theatre, newly renovated, in downtown Edinburgh, and for the next two weeks we lived on a college campus just outside the city and performed at the theatre each day. It was an exciting, wonderful time." As a footnote to the Edinburgh

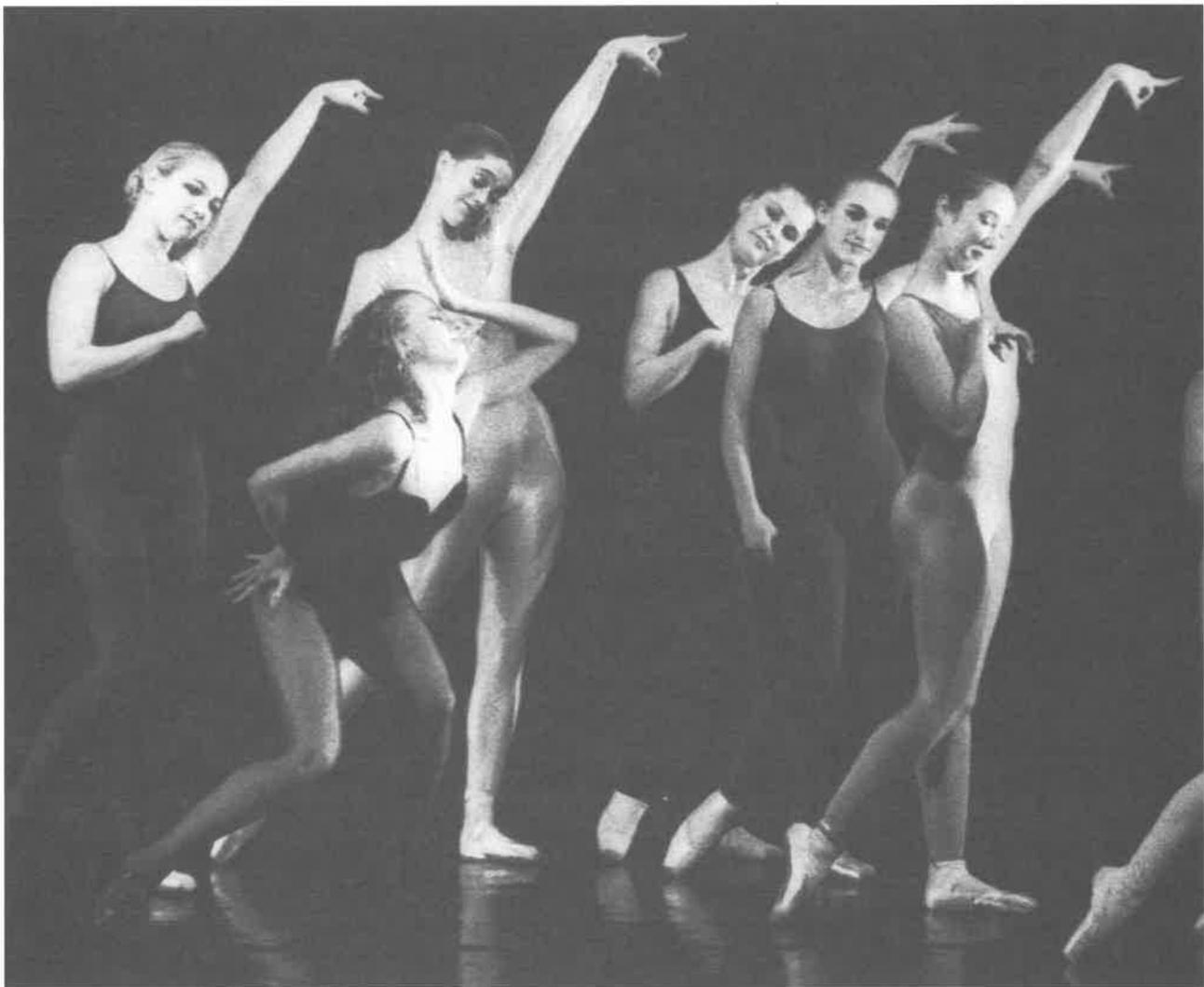
experience in 1994, one of the Burklyn dancers that year, Kristin Sloane, is now with the New York City Ballet and in the millennium year, 2000, she performed with her company at Edinburgh's Playhouse Theatre... while Angela and the Burklyn students sat in the audience and watched.

The success of the Edinburgh "connection" convinced Angela that Burklyn could offer different levels of training to dancers and do it successfully. As 1995 came along, she saw another opportunity to develop the program by creating a ballet experience for younger children. Her daughter, Pamela Whitehill, now retired from a successful ballet career, had created a Vermont-based movement program for pre-schoolers, "Kids In Motion," and it had worked so well that Angela saw an opportunity for Pamela to run a program for younger dancers at Burklyn. "All of our dancers were at least twelve years old," Angela said, "that's the way I set things up originally, But now I saw no reason why we couldn't do something with the little ones, we had the space, we had the teachers, we had the performing venue... and we had a nice, safe place for the kids to be."

"Square Roots" by Joseph Carow



he made the boys jump and . . .



the girls act!



The Children's Program 1995

So in 1995 Angela created "The Burklyn Children's Program," directed by Pamela Whitehill. It was for eight to ten-year-olds, the only program in the country to do so, and would run for three weeks, concurrently with the established Burklyn program. "We took twenty children from across the country," Angela recalled, "and Pamela was assisted by Debbie Glaskin and Debbie Hurst, both of whom had gone with us to Edinburgh the prior year as chaperones. Each also had daughters who had been with Burklyn for several years." At the end of the three week session, the children performed an original ballet, "Tear of the Sun," choreographed especially for them by Mathew Keefe. "They had their own matinee performance, and all the Burklyn dancers came to watch, some even helped the little ones do their make-up. The audience loved it!"



... and the older dancers helped

Master teachers that year included Jon Rodriguez formerly Artistic Director of the Dayton Ballet and now a faculty member of Wright State University who returned after an absence of several years, and Bob Barnett, Artistic Director of the Atlanta Ballet, who had also been away for awhile. The regulars were there, too: Arthur Leeth set the dream scene from "Don Q, Act II" on the Burklyn dancers, the first time it had ever been done at Burklyn, and Alexander Bennett staged the ballroom scene from "Romeo and Juliet."

In keeping with what was now a Burklyn choreographic tradition, Angela also invited Mathew Keefe and Marisa Robbins as resident choreographers, which meant that each week of the Burklyn season they would create a new ballet



Taking class with Edward Villella was a great honor

for the dancers. The highlight was Mathew Keefe's "Cooking Sessions," a lively, exciting ballet with dancers in chef hats and aprons and white uniforms. The following year this ballet was chosen by the Louisville Ballet to show case at the Southeast Regional Ballet Festival where Mathew won the Habich-Corey Award for best emerging choreographer.

After the first year's experience at Edinburgh, Angela had no doubt she wanted to return, and this time she decided to do it without Alexander Bennett's help. "I figured we'd learned enough that first year so we could now make it on our own, and I changed the name to the Burklyn Youth Ballet." But most of the other elements were the same: there would be twenty dancers, they would stay in a nearby college, they would be



"Swan Lake" the 'white ballets' help the dancers to work as one

in Edinburgh for two weeks and perform in the downtown Churchill Theatre. "We changed the program that year. We did 'Midnight Blue,' a lovely, softly lit ballet to the Strauss's 'Blue Danube Waltz,' choreographed by Joanne Hallier-Whitehill, who was now my daughter-in-law, my 'Arensky Dances,' and 'Peter and the Wolf.' It was a lovely program."

One of the added plusses for the dancers in Edinburgh was the presence of Edward Villella, Artistic Director of the Miami (FL) City Ballet whose company was in Edinburgh to perform at the same time that Burklyn was there. "I asked Eddie to teach some master classes for us, and he was delighted. He came out to the College, and the dancers thought it was wonderful."

As 1996 came, Angela had to pinch herself to realize she was starting her twentieth straight year with Burklyn. "I really hadn't given it much thought," she admitted, "but then my daughter Pamela reminded me, and suddenly it hit — twenty years with one program, twenty years with a single idea and look where it's come! 'Congratulations, Mom!' my daughter said, and all I could do was hug her and blot my tears."

Pamela and old friend Diane Vivona, now a well-respected choreographer, organized a gala celebration for Angela and Burklyn on the fifth week of the summer season. Diane brought a complete ballet — sets, costumes etc. — which she had just done in New York City. Called "The Goldfish Variations: The Dream State," it was a modern piece to the music of DeBussey. "The prop was a huge steel fish about twenty feet high," Diane recalled, "it was a dream piece I was going to perform at Pace University in a few weeks, and Angela loved it. It was fun to do."

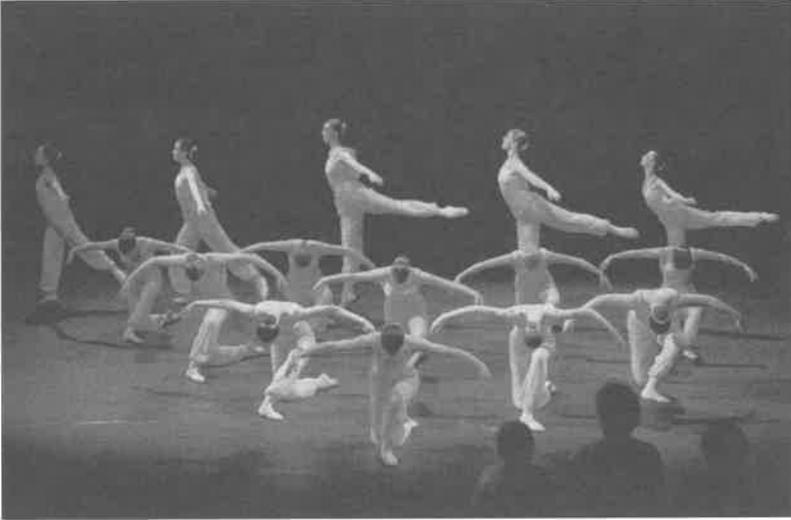
The gala continued with Alexander Bennett setting "Coppelia, Act II" and the company performing "Stars and Stripes" with music performed live by Kevin Galie, accompanist for the Boston Ballet. "Kevin came for the entire summer," Angela remembered, "so we had him in the studios every day and he enjoyed playing live at some

of the performances." Another feature at the gala was an original piece of choreography, "Early Departures," done by a Burklyn dancer, Robert Mills, in memory of his recently deceased brother. "It was incredibly emotional," Angela recalled.

Doreen Caferella came back as a master teacher, and she set a jazz piece to Cole Porter's music, which she called "Waltz Classique." What made it interesting was that Doreen, a classically trained dancer and choreographer, could impose certain ballet movements on the up-tempo jazz arrangement. A new master teacher made her appearance that summer: Angela had invited Patricia Brewer Jones from Oregon Ballet Theatre, after observing her teaching during the regular audition tour. "Patti really impressed me while I was in Portland," Angela said, "she showed me the kind of nurturing, positive attitude towards dancers that I try to encourage at Burklyn."

This was also the second year for The Children's Program, again directed by Pamela Whitehill. At the suggestion of Cherie Noble, Angela observed and then hired Molly Faulkner, a young dancer and choreographer from Arizona, to be resident choreographer for The Children's Program. Molly created a new ballet for the children, "The Eleventh Hour," based on a story by Graham Baese with music by Leroy Anderson. The children performed the ballet at the end of their three week session, and once again it was the only summer performing program in the United States for eight to ten-year old children.

Angela continued the "Edinburgh Connection," but this time the Burklyn dancers performed at Southside, a nontraditional theatre (meaning: except during the Fringe, it was not a theatre). Angela called it a "true Fringe experience" because of the makeshift nature of the venue, but the dancers enjoyed it thoroughly. "We did 'Hansel and Gretel' choreographed by Joe Carow," she said, "and I saw a ballet at the Southeast Regional Festival I knew would fit right in here, as well." It was "Sunrise," a contemporary ensemble production with a Balanchine "Serenade" quality as the lighting gradually



*"Sunrise," elegant, contemporary
"... a gentle ensemble piece"*



strengthened. The ballet was choreographed by Andrew Kuharsky, Artistic Director of the Greenville (SC) Ballet, and it was well-received. "One critic called it, "... a gentle ensemble piece with good unison and an attractive, oriental feel," Angela remembered, "and that made us all very happy."

By 1997 Angela had become convinced that a dancer's physical strength was crucial for performance longevity, and she was concerned that the Burklyn program did not emphasize that enough. She was aware of Pilates training, based on rehabilitation successes with injured military personnel, where the individual lies prone and exercises muscles in a series of monitored exercises. Angela thought dancers could be trained to improve individual strength levels by means of the exercises, and she invited Dolly Kelepecz, a Pilates teacher and practitioner from Las Vegas, Nevada, to set up the training at Burklyn. "The dancers loved it," Angela recalled, "and Dolly was such a good teacher. We bought Pilates Reformer equipment so Dolly could show dancers and master teachers how to use it, and from that point it has been part of the overall Burklyn Program."

Resident choreographer in 1997 was Erica Wolf from Boston who had danced with Burklyn for several years and started choreographing there, as well. She went on to the Louisville (KY) Ballet as a dancer and then returned to Boston as a choreographer. Also choreographing that summer was Emily Wyatt, attending Burklyn for the first time. Emily was able to develop her art through the continuing training that Angela offered each week, and by the end of the summer she "had become quite skilled." During ensuing years her choreography appeared regularly on the Burklyn performance schedule.

A new master teacher that year was Nicholas Pacana who had been a principal dancer with the Boston and Atlanta Ballets and who also performed a special ballet solo — "Alone" — at Burklyn. "The dancers were thrilled to see him rehearse and perform," Angela remembered. "He was a highly regarded professional, and they could

learn so much from him." Pacana also set "Bonjour," and Angela let him have the six strongest Burklyn dancers. "It was a non-stop ballet, and it required great skill and stamina to do it properly. Everyone loved it!" The classics weren't ignored that summer; Arthur Leeth, now in his sixteenth straight year with Burklyn, staged "Don Quixote — Act III," the first time it had been done in several years.

The Children's Program continued in 1997, and Bruce Alan Ewing who ran a ballet studio in Oak Ridge, Tennessee choreographed a new ballet, "Star Light, Star Bright," for the program. The "Edinburgh Connection" continued, as well, and once again Angela took twenty Burklyn dancers to perform as Burklyn Youth Ballet. Molly Faulkner choreographed "Dorothy of Oz" based on a story by Roger Baum, the great grandson of "Wizard of Oz" fame, Frank Baum. Roger Baum gave permission to Burklyn to turn his story into a ballet. The Burklyn dancers also performed "Romance" at Edinburgh, a ballet choreographed by Victoria Vittum from Houston, Texas which Angela had seen earlier that year at the National Regional Ballet Festival.

Yet another new step was taken that summer: it had become apparent that those in the Children's Program had nowhere to go once they grew beyond the ten year age limit that Angela had set. Until they would be old enough to come to the full Burklyn program — age twelve and-a-half — they would just have to wait... unless something else could be developed for them. Angela saw this as an opportunity, and in the summer of 1997 Burklyn launched the Intermediate Program for dancers aged eleven and twelve. Angela hired her daughter, Pamela Whitehill and her daughter-in-law, Joanne Whitehill, both experienced ballet professionals, to run the two week program which would culminate with a Saturday evening performance during the regular Burklyn season. Joanne Whitehill choreographed "Star Maiden" to music by Stravinski and Pamela Whitehill directed the program and the dancers, and it turned out well. "The young dancers had

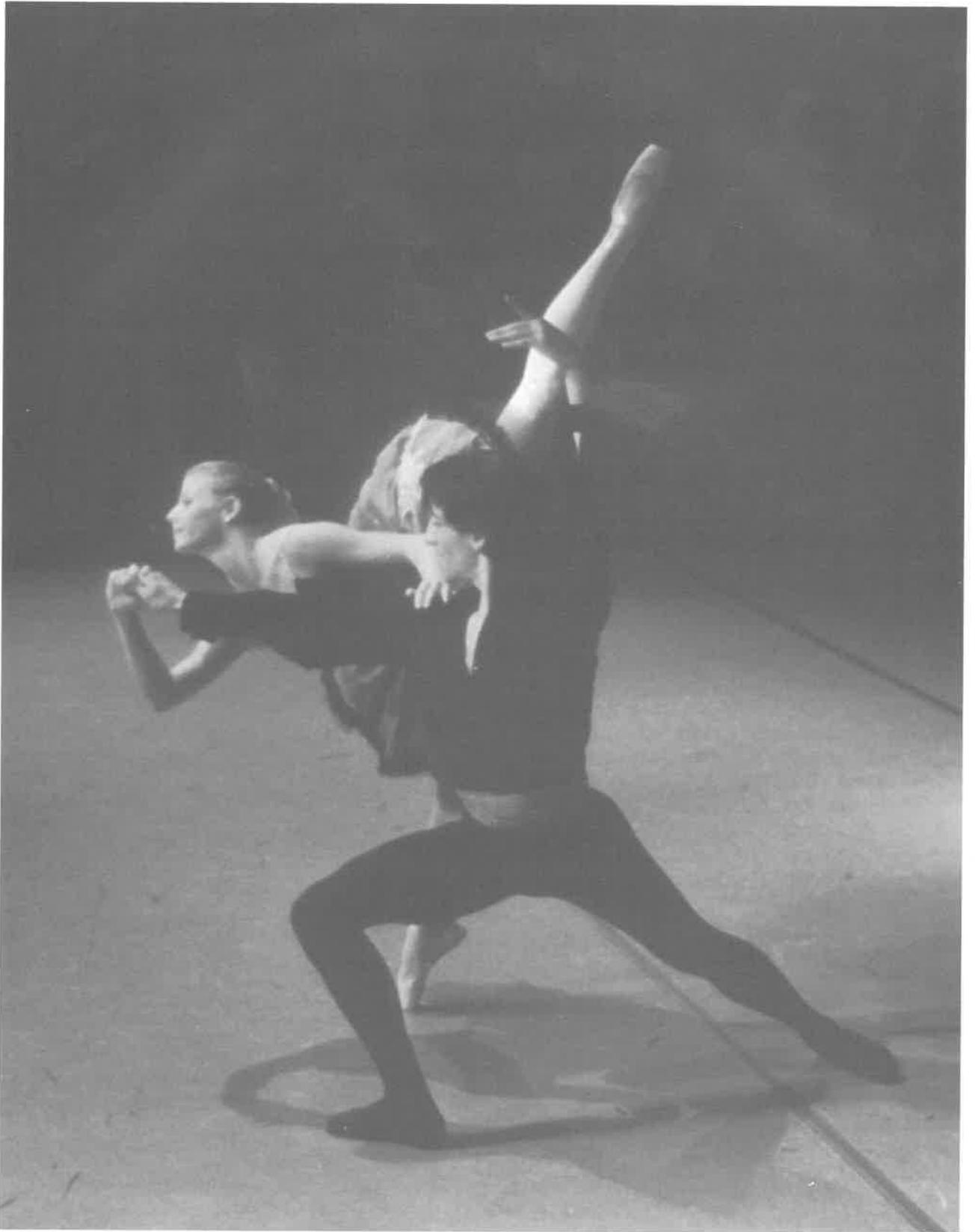
their first taste of ballet-type performing, where new choreography was set, and they loved it!"

By 1998 the Burklyn summer calendar was extremely full: there was the "Big" program, the Children's Program, the Intermediate Program,

The Choreographic Project and the "Edinburgh Connection," and each required special attention. Back for a second year was Bruce Alan Ewing from Oak Ridge, Tennessee, prepared to act as a master teacher and to set a ballet for the Children's



"Dorothy of Oz" an all new tale by Roger S. Baum.

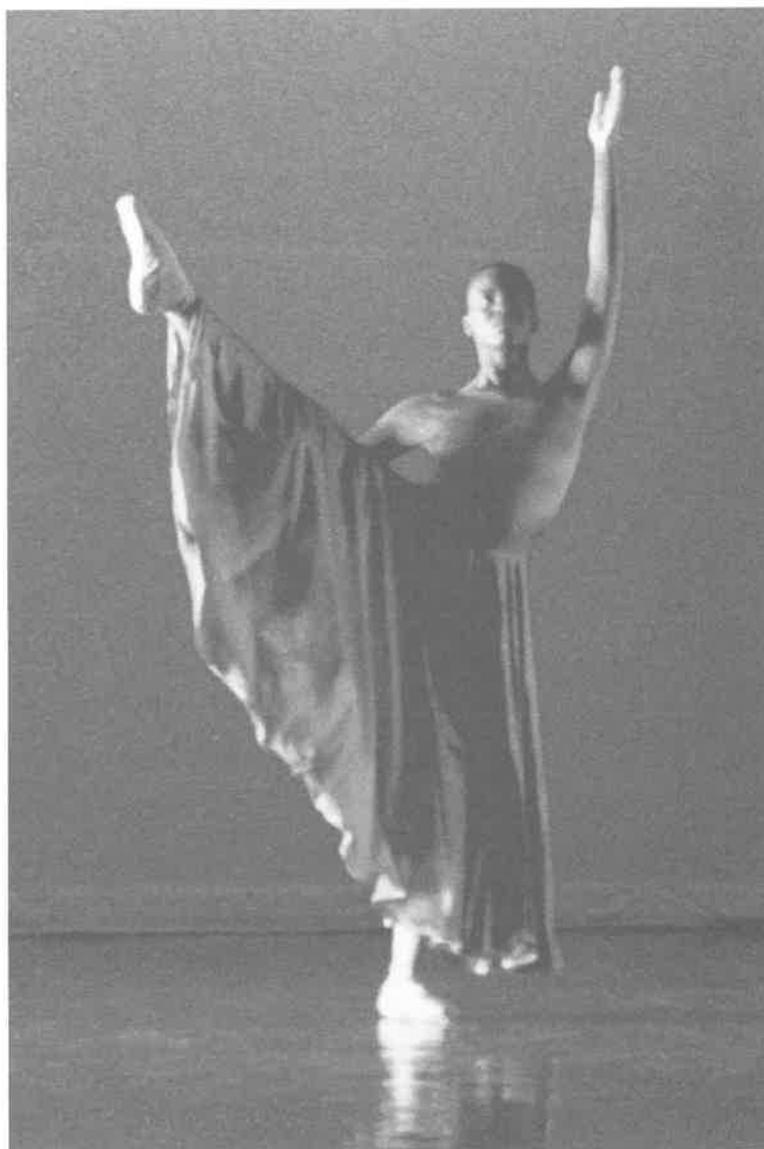


"Don Quixote"

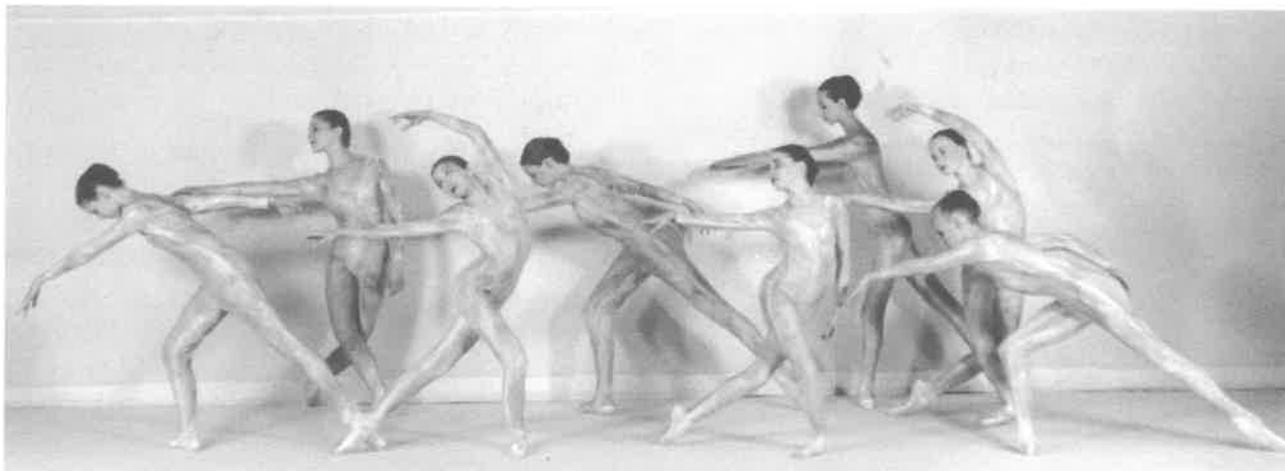
Program. During his first week as he was preparing for the annual July Fourth performance and demonstrating a 'brisé volé' without fully warming up, he ripped his achilles tendon and had to be rushed to a local hospital where, after surgery, his entire leg was put in a cast, and he would be on crutches for three months. In effect, he was now lost to the entire Burklyn program. But fortunately, Molly Faulkner had returned as resident choreographer, and Angela prevailed upon her to reset her "Eleventh Hour" for the Children's Program — the same piece she had set two years earlier. "None of the fourteen children in the program

had been at Burklyn when Molly did it before," Angela remembered, "and we had all the costumes, sets and music, so for the children it was a new ballet and everything worked out well."

There was also the Intermediate Program to produce, and once again, Molly Faulkner was tapped by Angela to put it together. "We had eighteen dancers in the program, and Molly choreographed 'The Princess and the Pea' for them. Just as the prior year they performed it on a Saturday evening alongside the older dancers in the Burklyn program. By now we could see a clear connection: dancers could start at Burklyn when they were



"Gloria!"



"Gloria!"

eight years old, and after three years they could move to the Intermediate Program where the dancing would be more challenging, and then after two more years they could move to the big program and work with pre-professional and professional dancers. It was exciting to contemplate."

In the regular Burklyn program that summer there was an exceptionally strong group of dancers: Rebecca Hurst and Sophie Poletti with Nevada Ballet Theatre, Melissa Framiglio with the Louisville Ballet, Wilson Lema and Danielle Cap

from the Tulsa (OK) Ballet, Erica Castro who went to dance with Colorado Ballet Theatre after the summer. Because of the strong dancers, Angela purchased the rights to Dennis Spaight's "Gloria" for the Edinburgh performances. Spaight, a well-known west coast choreographer had died a year or so before, but Sandra Baldwin, ballet mistress of Oregon Ballet Theatre was one of his executors and she agreed to come and set the ballet for Burklyn. "We borrowed costumes for 'Gloria' from St. Paul's School in Concord, New



"Gloria!"

Hampshire,” Angela recalled. “They had done the ballet a couple of years earlier and had costumes. It was a good moment for us: because it meant we had achieved a certain level of reliability — always a tricky thing with ballet companies.” Molly Faulkner, even with her work on the Children’s Program and the Intermediate Program, also choreographed Hans Christian Anderson’s “Snow Queen” for the Burklyn dancers to take to Edinburgh. “I don’t know what we would have done without Molly that summer,” Angela said.

As for the regular Burklyn performances, Angela revived “4 plus 2,” her own ballet on the different levels of requited and unrequited love. “We hadn’t done it in a few years, and I’ve always thought it was one of my best creations.” Patricia Brewer Jones from Oregon Ballet Theatre was also back that summer as a master teacher, and she set “Metheny” to the composition of guitarist Pat

Metheny. It was a contemporary ballet with the dancers in bright red unitards done to jazz music, and the audience loved it.

When 1999 came, Angela reluctantly decided not to offer the Children’s Program and to replace it permanently with the new Intermediate Program. “There seemed a greater need for a program with ten to twelve year olds than with the younger level,” she said, mentioning also that her daughter, Pamela Whitehill, had decided to go back to school and would not be available to direct the program. Instead, Angela decided to have two two-week Intermediate Programs, one following the other, and hired Molly Faulkner to run them both. Eighteen dancers came for each session, and there was a full performance on the main Burklyn calendar at the end of each session. Molly choreographed “Tweet Suite” for the first session and Molly and Rebecca Rosenberg chore-



“Peter and the Wolf” is sure to please



"Zebra Crossing"
Rebecca Rosenberg and Rob Royce

ographed "Behind the Nursery Door" for the second session, and both brought enthusiastic response from the now-widening and growing audience.

Two new faces made their appearances at Burklyn that summer. In the spring of 1999 Angela had received phone calls — separately — from two New York choreographers who wanted to come to Burklyn and set some choreography on the Burklyn dancers. "I told them that would be great and we'd be glad to have them... but we couldn't pay them anything except for room and board," Angela said. They had no problem with that, and first, Amy Danis and then Julia Gleich came for a week. Robert Barnett had suggested that Amy contact Angela, so she came with strong credentials, and she set "Zebra Crossing," done to a series of African folk songs. Three months later, she became one of the producers of the hit Broadway musical "Swing," and she urged Angela to send her any Burklyn dancer who wanted to audition for the touring company.

Molly Faulkner had suggested that Julia Gleich contact Angela, and because of Molly's

relationship with Burklyn, she, too came with high praise. Julia set original choreography and a classical ballet, "Three and One" on the Burklyn dancers, and Angela was pleased with the result. "It was something new and the audience really liked it," she said, "and a few months later Julia redid it at the Joyce Soho Theatre in New York before a sophisticated ballet audience, and they echoed Burklyn reactions."

Regular Burklyn master teachers returned that summer including Alexander Bennett who set "Swan Lake — Act I" and Bruce Alan Ewing who set his own work, "Quelque Rien" to the music of Benjamin Britten. An old Burklyn favorite, "Paquita," was also on the program, this time set by New Zealand dancer Greta Murray. And another Burklyn dancer returned: Jonathon Tabbert, who had won kudos for his early choreography, had now graduated from Harid in Boca Raton (FL) and came back to set his own work, "Candide d'Esprit," to the music of Leonard Bernstein's "Candide." Angela not only welcomed him back to Burklyn, but by the end of the summer she had arranged for him to audition with the Charleston (SC) Ballet... and he received a contract!



. . . Jake Lyon and Vladik Stukalov and Rob Royce

The “Edinburgh Connection” continued that summer with a major new development: Angela was able to gain performance space at George Square Theatre, the official theatre of the University of Edinburgh. “It was quite a coup,” she said, “now, for the first time, we didn’t have to make do with Fringe-type, temporary arrangements, we had a legitimate, working theatre to perform in, and the dancers were ecstatic about it.” To celebrate this new step Angela choreographed a new ballet, “Le Bal,” with the dancers waltzing across stage to the music of Hector Berlioz’s “Symphony Fantastique.” Also on the Edinburgh program was Andrew Kuharsky’s “Sunrise” which had made such a nice impression three years earlier. “I wanted to provide something old as well as new,” Angela said, “and both the critics and knowledgeable Edinburgh audiences were familiar with ‘Sunrise’ but they had never seen ‘Le Bal.’” Angela also brought back again the well-known story of “Peter and the Wolf” and this provided additional foundation for a combination of old and new. “The critics liked it when we did it several years before, so why not let them see it again?” Her idea bore fruit. *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh’s premier newspaper, called Burklyn a “...fresh-faced company [which] performs works that are simple but attractive.”

With the millennium year — 2000 — the structure of Burklyn underwent a major change. For several years Angela had toyed with the idea of delegating more responsibility for day-to-day operation to someone else so she could get back to her first love: working with the young dancers. In Arthur Leeth, her long-time master teacher from the Boston Ballet, she had an obvious choice. He had been with the program for almost twenty years, he had set myriad classics on the Burklyn dancers, he was former ballet master for the Boston Ballet and he had been a much-praised, former dancer, as well. He was highly respected in the world of ballet, and his contacts were many. “I spoke with Arthur about it shortly after the first of the year,” Angela recalled, “and I think he was stunned at first. He didn’t know quite what to say, but when I explained I was looking for a Director

of Operations, someone who could manage things if I were ever away for a few days, and who could relieve me of some of the administrative responsibilities, he became enthusiastic about it.”

And as Burklyn opened the millennium season — 2000 — Arthur Leeth would be there for the entire six weeks, plus two in Scotland. Angela, of course, would still make final decisions, but now she could devote herself to the dancers and rekindle the strong bond she had nurtured in Burklyn’s early years. “I know how dancers need someone to lean on when things aren’t going quite right,” she said, “I’ve been there, and I wanted to get back there for the young people coming into the program.”

Two new master teachers made their Burklyn appearances in the millennium year, though only one was unfamiliar with the Burklyn experience. Ashley Nemeth had been a Burklyn dancer in the early to mid nineteen-nineties, had made the trip to Edinburgh in 1995 and 1996 and was now a successful teacher of “swing dancing” in the Denver area. Angela knew how this dance form had become popular across the country, spurred on by the Broadway musical, “Swing” that Burklyn choreographer, Amy Danis, had co-produced. “I knew the dancers would love Ashley,” Angela said, “so I asked her to come for two weeks and run a ‘swing dance’ class. The dancers found it exciting and fun.” The other new master teacher was Thom Clower, former Artistic Director of the Dallas (TX) Ballet, a nonstop bundle of energy, and now Artistic Director of the Yuma (AZ) Ballet Theatre. “I had known Thom years before when he was teaching at Southeast Regional Festivals and when I did auditions in Dallas,” Angela said, “and he was an excellent teacher, and I knew the Burklyn dancers would love him.”

Another landmark, of sorts, was achieved in year 2000 — Burklyn had more men than ever before... fourteen in all! That meant more pas-de-deux classes were available and a more varied program for the Saturday evening performances could be developed. It was also a year when a fourteen year old Burklyn dancer — Anna Lindemann



"Paquita"



"Le Bal," choreography Angela Whitebill



"Raymonda"

from Colorado — composed her own music and choreographed it, as well. Her ballet — and musical composition — was called "Garden Suite," and it portrayed vivid life that resided within a fertile flower garden.

Other master teachers in 2000 included Alexander Bennett, returning for his twenty-third Burklyn season, who revived his favorite ballet, "Phantom of the Ball," to a score by Berlioz (with Alex Lodi as the Phantom and Rebecca Rosenberg



"Midnight Blue"



"Three and One" choreographed by Julia Gleich

as the Lady in Black); Julia Gleich who staged "Julio's Box" an original piece of choreography with two full lines of dancers, to the music of Morton Gould; Diane Vivona whom Angela had hired to direct the Burklyn choreographic program, which gave structure and guidance to the young choreographers whose work was always displayed on the fifth Burklyn Saturday evening performance.

Even Arthur Leeth, now busy as Burklyn's Director of Operations, managed to continue his master teacher work by staging for the first time at Burklyn, the "Diana and Acteon" pas-de-deux, an extremely difficult work he had learned when he was working at the Vagonova Institute in Russia. One reason he staged it was so Polly Creer, a young Burklyn counselor, would have an audition piece to show several ballet companies she was interested in joining. It worked because by the end of the summer Polly had indeed been offered a job... with the Charleston (SC) Ballet.

The Intermediate Program, once again, comprised two two-week sessions, both directed by Ami Yaro, a former Burklyn dancer and a graduate of the dance program at the University of Iowa. There were eighteen young dancers in the first session and twenty in the second session. For the first session Ami and Angela decided to use Joanne Whitehill's "Midnight Blue," a lovely, diaphanously staged ballet danced to the music of Strauss's Blue Danube Waltz and previously done by the full Burklyn program; in the second session, Ami created original choreography and the young dancers performed "Dancing Through the Centuries."

Finally, the summer drew to a close with Angela and twenty dancers making their way to Edinburgh, Scotland for Burklyn's seventh consecutive season at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. "By now, I knew what kind of ballets attracted audiences in Edinburgh," Angela said. "We had to offer a 'story ballet,' a fairy tale not only for but

recognizable by children as well as adults.” During the spring of 2000 Angela had contacted Magdalena Maury, Artistic Director of the

Georgia Youth Ballet. “Magdalena was a wonderful choreographer, she had grown up in the world of ballet and her mother had trained with the



The dancers got stronger and stronger, Jeannette Buchner & Christopher Bough in “Paquita”



"Le Bal" Laura Wilson and Shiloh Anderson on stage in Edinburgh

Cuban National Ballet. I knew she could do good work for us." Angela decided to do "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," and Magdalena Maury choreographed it. Angela chose Rebecca Rosenberg to dance as Snow White with Rob Royce as the Prince, and the first inkling Angela had that this could be a very successful year was when the Burklyn dancers were riding in from the airport after having just arrived in Edinburgh. A large city bus passed them, and there!... plastered on the side of the bus was a banner with foot high letters announcing "Snow White and the..." as one of the Fringe offerings. "You couldn't pay for advertising like that!" Angela said, noting that in succeeding days it seemed every Edinburgh city bus carried the same banner. But that was not all. "Every day during the Fringe, the largest Scottish newspaper, *The Scotsman*, always comes out with reviews and summaries of the various programs. It's eagerly awaited by everyone, and this year...!" Smack on the front page, full sized, in color, margin to margin... a close up of Anna Lindholm from Southern California, in costume as Dopey, one of the precious dwarfs. "It was really exciting," Angela said, "we had great audiences and the dancers will never, ever forget the experience... nor will I."

So the spur for the silver anniversary season is in place as the Burklyn summer of 2001 takes shape. There will be familiar faces such as Arthur Leeth (continuing as Director of Operations) Alexander Bennett, David Howard, Robert Barnett, Patricia Brewer Jones, Dolly Kelepecz,

Julia Gleich, Thom Clower, Joanne Whitehill, Ami Yaro, Rebecca Rosenberg, Rob Royce; there will be new/old faces such as Marianne Hraibi, Jenny Creer-King and Diane Vivona; there will be new faces such as Amanda McKerrow and John Gardner, principals with American Ballet Theatre, Cornelia Sampson, Artistic Director of Michigan Ballet Theatre and Joyce King, a highly regarded jazz teacher from New York. The Intermediate Program will, once again, have two sessions, and for Edinburgh, Burklyn will offer "Cinderella and The Flower Fairies" to the music of Johan Strauss and with original choreography by Burklyn's own Joanne Whitehill and Rob Royce.

On the fifth weekend of the summer — July 27-29th, 2001 — Burklyn's twenty-fifth birthday will be celebrated with a gala at Johnson. "We'll have a banquet, dancing, performances, special classes and general social events where anyone who comes back will find familiar faces. We're sending out more than three thousand invitations, and we expect a great turn-out!"

For Angela it's the culmination of a dream that has become a reality, an idea that grew to fruition beyond her wildest expectations. "If someone had told me twenty-five years ago that we'd have had the successes we've had, I would have thought them insane," she said, and then laughed. "But you know, as I look back I realize it's the people who have come through here that have made Burklyn what it is, and for that I'm eternally grateful."



... and we all had fun!

Photo credits:

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Bertha T. Kourey, pp: 21 top left, 24, 29.

Bruce Perkins, pp: 36, 46, 48, 52, 54, 55, 60.

Paul Seaby, pp: 40 top left, 56.

Bruce Morrissey, pp: 30, 40 bottom left, 42, 50, 57, 59, 60 bottom, 61, 62, 63.

Artistic Alliance, pp: 36, 42 bottom left.

Deborah Glaskin, pp: 40 middle left, 47, 48 top.

Many thanks to Lillian Ain for her help in producing this book.

Autographs & Notes

