A CENTURY OF

THE EARLY YEARS

By Company Instructor/Historian Carol Shults

"Miss Maud Ainsworth requests the pleasure of your company at a dance recital given by Miss Katherine Laidlaw Friday evening, January 19, 1917 at eight o'clock Lincoln High School"

The program itself, to which the above, beautifully printed invitation summoned many of Portland's socially prominent citizens, was divided into three sections: "Greek, Old-Time Dances, and Oriental." Reviewed by Gertrude P. Corbett in The Oregonian, readers learned that: "Each and every number...was charming, and the orchestra added greatly to the delightful function," "Miss Laidlaw danced eleven times...She has the grace and abandon of youth, charming personality and a great deal of dramatic expression. Her Oriental numbers were exceptionally good, the 'Temple Dance,' 'Nautch,' and the closing 'Orienteal' calling forth bursts of applause."

Katherine Laidlaw's debut performance reveals, in the titles of her dances, a great deal about the period, a truly memorable one in the annals of dance. The "Greek" section certainly owes its inspiration to Isadora Duncan (1877-1927); the "Oriental" to the style of Ruth St. Denis (1879-1968), with whom Laidlaw studied for several years. Together these women were the founders of the first truly original American dance form, Modern Dance, although the term was not in use until the late 1920's.

Isadora took her "art dancing" to Europe in 1900, where she performed acquired at the Heilig Theatre in Portland, Oregon. When the company was here in February 1915, their manager came up with the idea of increasing box-office receipts by offering her passionately individual solo dances, influencing profoundly the dance and theatre world from Paris to St. Petersburg and the Imperial Ballet. But Ruth St. Denis, after a three year sojourn in Europe (1906-09), stayed in the U.S., touring frequently and training generations of dancers. In 1914, she met and married the dancer Ted Shawn (1891-1972) and they began to tour the states with a concert group of dancers, many of whom were trained by Ruth at her school in Los Angeles.

According to dance writer Jane Sherman, the name Denishawn, by which the school was known, was a prize for the best new name for one of the pair's dances. "Denishawn Rose Mazurka" was the winner and St. Denis and Shawn liked the name so much, they instantly changed the name of their school.

Portland's Katherine Laidlaw (1894-1967), whose dance teacher locally had been Edith Varney, studied at Denishawn from 1916 to 1920. She appeared in performance with the company at the Greek Theatre in Berkeley and went on a cross-country tour with the St. Denis Concert Dancers in 1920. Her colleagues at Denishawn and on tour included a veritable "who's who" of great American modern dancers: Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, and Martha Graham. Others, like Louise Brooks, became movie stars.

Katherine's training at Denishawn included classes in ballet, which Ted Shawn felt was basic to technical achievement even though he wrote that "Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis freed movement itself from the stylized, artificial crystallizations of 19th century ballet. The use of fluid movement through the entire body, especially the torso, as against the rigid torso of the ballet dancer of 1900, was one of the major differences in the technique and vocabulary of the modern dance as against its predecessors."

After she came home to Portland to teach and perform, Katherine continued her studies, especially in ballet. She went to the Cornish School in Seattle to study with Mary Ann Wells (who later taught Robert Joffrey and many other famous dancers) and in 1924 studied there again with Adolph Bolm (1884-1951). In 1926, she made a trip to New York City and worked with Leo Staats of the Paris Opera and Ivan Tarasoff. In a newspaper account of her

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Dance In Portland

Vaslav Nijinsky, one of the greatest artists in ballet history, as the Faun in his ballet, L’Après-midi d’un Faune, which he danced in Portland in 1917. Pictured here with his sister Bronislava Nijinska.

Anna Pavlova (1881-1931) appeared in Portland several times and was seen here in all her famous dances (The Swan, The Dragonfly, The Fairy Doll, etc). In 1916, she danced the Snow Scene from The Nutcracker with her company, probably the first time any part of The Nutcracker was danced here. Katherine Laidlaw and her students appeared on stage at least once with the legendary Russian ballerina’s company.

Ruth St. Denis in her “Nautch” dance, one of the numerous solo dances which made her name in the early years of the century. She and Isadora Duncan are considered the founders of American modern dance.

Katherine Laidlaw in one of her “interprétice” dances, typical of her period, the 1920’s, and indicative of her years with St. Denis. Courtesy of Betty Gayer.

Adolph Bolm, one of the first stars of Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, in a photograph inscribed to Katherine Laidlaw, who studied ballet with him in 1924.
trip she mentions seeing again her old friend, Martha Graham, who was “doing some interesting and original work, along the lines of free emotional and musical expression.”

While teaching at the Ellison-White Conservatory, Katherine Laidlaw gave her students many performing opportunities, often at Portland’s Helig Theatre on Broadway. In the early years these were often “music visualizations,” a term used by Ruth St. Denis to describe her choreography. Many Laidlaw students went on to serious careers in dance. Among them are: Ruby Asquith, Natalie Lauterstein, Margaret Rogers and Jacqueline Martin.

When the audience filed in to view Katherine Laidlaw’s program of dances presented by Miss Maud Ainsworth in 1917, many of them - and certainly Katherine and her circle of dancer colleagues - had been to the Helig Theatre to see the Diaghilev Ballets Russes only the week before. Directed on the company’s only tour of the U.S. by Vaslav Nijinsky (1889-1950), the three performances presented included the best of the legendary repertoire of the famous troupe. Only one ballet was repeated in the three performances in Portland. Nijinsky danced the Bluebird Pas de Deux, Carnaval and The Afternoon of a Faun, his own choreography. His partner was Lydia Lopokova. Adolph Bolm danced the Polovetsian Dances from Prince Igor, the ballet by Michel Fokine that made Bolm a sensation in Paris in 1909. Later, in the early 1930’s, Katherine Laidlaw sent her student, Margaret Rogers, to study with Bolm in San Francisco where she met her future husband, Nicholas Vasiliev, also a Bolm student. I myself studied in Houston in 1957 with Vera Nemtchina, one of the Nymphs in Nijinsky’s Afternoon of a Faun when it was performed in Portland at the Helig. The circle never ends.

When the Katherine Laidlaw material was given to OBT last February, James Canfield and I sat enthralled on the floor of the office, going through the box piece by piece; it quickly became apparent what a treasure trove of dance history it was. We exclaimed again and again at the sight of things we had never seen before, including a Souvenir Program from Anna Pavlova’s 1914-1915 tour, a rose from Pavlova’s costume, the enormous drum used by Katherine in her interpretive dance classes, autographed photos of Ruth St. Denis and Adolph Bolm, and a little photo of Louise Brooks with her famous hairdo in a 1920's St. Denis program. These things are incredibly special for dance lovers and must be shared, along

with many other marvels from other periods. So, watch for a display of Portland’s Dance History in conjunction with OBT’s tenth anniversary season, 1998-99. We are all grateful to Betty Guyer, who understood the importance of the collection.

I would also like to gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Frank Hrubant who called my attention to the Denishawn-in-Portland story; my conversations about Katherine Laidlaw with Jacqueline Schumacher, Nina Raimondo, and Felice Lauterstein Driesen; Martha Ullman West for library know-how, Blaine Covert for his help with the historical photographs; and the Oregon Historical Society for their marvelous collection.

Carol Shults’ performing career was at Fort Worth Ballet under the direction of Mia Slavenska and her training was strongly Cecchetti-based. A company instructor for OBT since its inception in 1989, Ms. Shults has also developed the "Performance Perspectives" pre-curtain lectures into an established tradition. With Sandra Baldewin, she is caretaker of the ballets in the Dennis Spaight Trust. In 1993, she served as librettist on James Canfield’s new production of The Nutcracker, and in 1994 began teaching a course entitled “Behind the Scenes at OBT,” an in-depth look at each of the Company’s productions.

OBT is planning an event in April, 1997 honoring

Jacqueline Schumacher

We would like to reach as many of her former students and their families as possible.

Please leave your name at the Patron Information Table in the theatre lobby or call OBT at (503) 227-0977, ext. 185.

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The Eagle Printing and Binding Co;
Where She Danced, The Birth of American Art Dance, by Elizabeth Kendall;
A CENTURY OF

THE THIRTIES—THE CHRISTENSEN ERA

By Company Instructor/Historian Carol Shults

"Mr. Christensen, the founder and director of the William F. Christensen Repertory Ballet School, came to Portland three years ago, at the close of his professional stage engagements, with the inspiration and ambition to establish and develop a permanent ballet."

Taken from a brochure describing a six-week summer session in 1935, the preceding statement was already in the process of coming true. What William (Bill) F. Christensen did here in six years in the depths of the Depression is extraordinary, and he did establish a permanent ballet company - it's just that it didn't stay in Portland!

Bill Christensen (b. 1902) had a long-standing link to Portland, although he and his wife Mignon had been traveling for several years with the other Christensen brothers, Lew and Harold, in a highly successful dance act on the Orpheum vaudeville circuit. Bill's uncle Moses Christensen, a founding member of the Portland Symphony in the 1890's, had played the viola, conducting occasionally, for 20 years. He also taught both instrumental music and social dancing in a studio at Eleventh and Yamhill. (This school was the beginning of the still existing tradition of social dancing instruction for young people here.)

The death of Uncle Moses, combined with the precarious health of Bill's wife Mignon (she was later diagnosed with multiple sclerosis) and the realities of the Depression, caused Bill to decide to establish himself in Portland with a serious school to train classical dancers.

"The Depression put fear in all of us," Bill said years later.

"Nobody had a dime! But here was this wonderful, positive thing for young people to do." Mary Ausplund Tooz describes how her mother, Ada Ausplund, a school teacher, saw the tremendous drive and high quality in the young ballet master and his artistic enterprise and threw herself into doing everything she could to support him. The Christensen ballet school in the Selling-Hirsch Building (Tenth and Washington) in downtown Portland

Fund raisers were often card parties in the studio, where people played bridge and had refreshments for a $5 donation. Students were taught Classical Ballet, Character, Pantomime and Adagio (partnering), a familiar curriculum today, except for the pantomime, which rarely gets its own class now. Adagio was an especially strong suit for several reasons: Christensen had years of experience, including intensive work with a Russian folk dance troupe on the vaudeville circuit; he attracted an amazing number of male students; and his brothers made frequent appearances at the studio, partnering the girls and generally multiplying the opportunities to learn. (One of my favorite stories comes from Felice Driesen, who tells how she and the other girls adored Lew Christensen, whose tall Nordic looks are famous. She says they "giggled about pretending to faint when he walked by, so he would have to pick us up!")

The third generation of a Danish-American dance dynasty who were trained by Italian masters of the art of classical dance, the Christensen brothers were a phenomenon of dance in this country whose contributions have been well documented. In a 1973 Dance Magazine cover story on them, writer Olga Maynard wrote, "The Christensens have an evangelical fervor for the dance. It is demonstrated in their development of dancers." This training of people who went on to make professional careers began here in Portland, in Bill's school and company.

A good foundation had been established by the training of Katherine Laidlaw, from whom came many of
Christensen’s best students in 1932. One of the first was Natalie Lauterstein, with whom Bill quickly set up a dance partnership, performing an Italian Tarantella pas de deux on a local series, “Auditorium Afternoons,” in September, 1933.

After a year with Christensen in Portland, Natalie at 17 was ready to try her wings, and she left in September 1934 for study in New York at the newly organized School of American Ballet. She was there for a year, returning to dance Chopiniana and Coppélia for the Rose Festival in June 1935. Then, back in New York, she was chosen by Balanchine to join his first company in the United States, The American Ballet. The company was at the Metropolitan Opera and among the other dancers were Lew and Harold Christensen and Ruby Asquith, a Portland dancer who later married Harold.

One of the important themes during the Christensen years in Portland is that of collaboration with musicians and musical groups. The relationship that developed between the Christensen Ballet and the Portland Junior Symphony (later the Youth Philharmonic), and its director Jacques Gershkovich, was on a very large scale. The first joint concert of the two groups occurred on June 12, 1934 at the Civic Auditorium as part of the Rose Festival celebrations.

The event was billed significantly as “RUSSIAN BALLET, Cast of 100,” one has to remember that, at the time, ballet was Russian in the public’s mind. Quite a lot of ballet had appeared in Portland, always of some Russian variety, and the identification was understandable. Gershkovich, himself a Russian émigré, was a veteran of a tour with the ballerina Anna Pavlova, and he urged the talented and enthusiastic young Christensen to create a Nutcracker.

An immense success, Bill’s Nutcracker starred Christensen, Lauterstein and, as Sugarplum Fairy, Janet Reed, a teenager who had moved to Portland with her mother from Tolo, Oregon in the late 1920’s. A student first of Ida Dora dancer, choreographer and, most importantly, teacher, eventually becoming Associate Professor of Ballet at the University of Utah (in the department founded by Bill Christensen in 1951) and training generations of students herself.

In July of 1935 Bill Christensen and his Portland Ballet undertook an ambitious project: a tour to Seattle with the program they had presented at the Rose Festival in June, Coppélia and Chopiniana. Presented at the Moore Theater and billed as “Midsummer Night Ballets,” Christensen took 75 young dancers. Bill was able to mobilize his brothers Lew and Harold, who had a break from their busy professional dancing schedules in New York. (The brothers seemed to always go to enormous lengths to help one another. Remember that travel then was by car or train!) The three-performance tour was a tremendous success and the young dancers remembered it forever. One of them was 14-year-old Jacqueline Martin.

The previous January, Jacqueline had met Christensen students Natalie Lauterstein, Janet Reed, and Celene Radding when they all danced together in a performance of La Boutique Fantasque on a program by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo here on tour. All the most famous Russian dancers of the day were on stage for the young girls to watch from the wings: Toumanova, Baronova, Riabouchinska, Massine, Danilova, etc. A review in the Daily Journal said “the Portland dancers did so well that the customary company group leader was dispensed with.” Jacqueline, whose former teacher Katherine Laidlaw had just moved to California, made the move to the Christensen studio.

In 1936, the young Portland company performed three times with the Portland Symphony conducted by Willem Van Hoogstraten. Some of the Christensen ballets presented were: Visions de Massenet, A Romanian Rhapsody, Bolero, The Bartered Bride and Cœur de Glace.

It seems clear that William F. Christensen had accomplished wonders in his four years in Portland. But it was at this point that he began to take stock of his possibilities. Now 34 years old, he was hungry, he said, for “a bigger and better company.” He had been to New York and seen the Balanchine group his brothers were working with. Then, in 1937, an offer came from San Francisco. Adolph Bolm, who had been ballet master at the

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Opera Ballet there, was leaving and was replaced by Serge Oukrainsky. They needed a male soloist.

Christensen took the job and, when he left - leaving Natalie Lauterstein (soon to be Mrs. Daniel Miller) to teach in his Portland school, a group of his best students went with him. Within a year he had taken over the Opera Ballet job and had formed his own ballet company as well. He needed to pay his dancers, the kids from Portland who had put so much faith in him, and he was able to book performance dates around the area. This was the birth of the San Francisco Ballet. The dancers from Portland who went with Bill the first year were Mary Carruthers, Ronald Chetwood, Jacqueline Martin (who left high school), Zelda Moray, Billie Otis, Janet Reed, Earl Riggins, Fred Staver and Merle Williams. The next year they were joined by Mattlyn Gavers, Alice Kotchik, Norma Nielsen, Ruth Rickman, and Jeannette Tucker.

In July 1938, the whole company returned for a performance in Portland at Multnomah Stadium. The program consisted of Bach Suite by William Christensen (he had changed the spelling of his first name) and A Midsummer Night’s Dream with choreography by Lew Christensen, who also danced Oberon to Janet Reed’s Titania. Jacqueline Martin was Helena and Natalie Lauterstein returned to the stage as Puck.

This was a set-back for a permanent ballet company in Portland, but Bill’s supporters were so fond of him, they simply wished him success in his new endeavor. It would be another fifteen years before a further attempt was made to establish a company, but dance remained alive in the studios, with the frequent stimulus of touring companies.

Acknowledgement and thanks
For conversations about the period to:
Jacqueline Martin Schumacher, Felice Lauterstein Driesen, Mary Ausplund Tooze, Janet Reed, Maria Dare and John Gardner.
For access to important materials:
Jeffrey Miller and Jeremy Miller, The Performing Arts Library of San Francisco, The Oregon Historical Society, Mary Ausplund Tooze, The Oregon Symphony, Jacqueline Martin Schumacher, and Bené Arnold.

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Janet Reed in Balanchine’s The Nutcracker in 1954.

Portland’s Janet Reed had a brilliant career as a professional dancer. One of the first entirely American-trained women to achieve ballerina status, she began her career here where she was trained mainly by William F. Christensen, who created ballets for her beginning with his 1934 Nutcracker in Portland when she was 18. She went to New York after several years as principal dancer with San Francisco Ballet and joined Eugene Loring’s Dance Players. From 1943 to 1946, Janet danced with the newly formed Ballet Theatre; in 1948, she was invited by George Balanchine to join his New York City Ballet as a principal dancer.

She had the talent and good fortune to have several roles in landmark ballets created for her by two great choreographers: Jerome Robbins (Fancy Free and Interplay), and George Balanchine (Bourrée Fantasque, Western Symphony and Nutcracker). A vivacious redhead, she was described by contemporaries as having a dance style that was natural, spontaneous and joyous. After five years as ballet mistress of NYCB, she returned to live and teach in Seattle where she helped to found Pacific Northwest Ballet in 1974.
A Century of

The 1940's

By Carol Shults

leader of the cancan girls.

In his years with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Robert Irwin worked with choreographers Michel Fokine, George Balanchine and Frederick Ashton as well as Massine. He also knew, because of their creative associations with the company, artists Matisse, Picasso, and Salvador Dali and the composer Paul Hindemith. When, after injuring a foot, he retired from the company to get married and began his long second career teaching ballet in Corvallis, Alexandra Danilova, reigning prima ballerina of the company, was godmother to his first child, Kathy.

While Bob Irwin was touring the world with the Ballet Russe, colleagues from Portland were engaged in an adventure in California where they were dancing for Bill Christensen. Bill was energetically transforming the San Francisco Opera Ballet into a full-scale dance organization and touring with an extensive repertoire (much of it choreographed in Portland) all over the United States.

In 1940 he embarked on an extremely ambitious undertaking – the production of a full-length Swan Lake. It was the first time this great classic had been staged for an American company and three of the four principal dancers were from Portland: Jacqueline Martin (b. 1920) was Odette, the White Swan; Janet Reed was Odile, the Black Swan; and Ronald Chetwood was Von Rothbart, the evil sorcerer. Partnering both ballerinas was Lew Christensen as Prince Siegfried.

J. Bratov wrote about Jacqueline Martin’s performance in San Francisco’s Russian Daily newspaper, “Novaya Zarya” after this performance: “There was a perfect union between the soul of Tchaikovsky, with his musical and choreographic conception of the ballet, and the soul of this young girl with her remarkably lyric choreographic interpretation.”

After dancing many other principal roles in the Christensen repertoire (Coppélia, The Bartered Bride, In Old Vienna) and retiring from the company in 1942 to marry, Jacqueline Martin Schumacher returned to Portland where she soon began to teach ballet in her home on Mt. Tabor. Later she was hired to direct the ballet division of a studio run by Richard Billings

"Where did you learn to dance like that?," the great Russian dancer and choreographer, Léonide Massine, asked Portland's T. Robert Irwin (b. 1915) in 1937 after an audition class when the Ballet Russe was here on tour. Indeed Bob Irwin was a student of William Christensen, who taught in Portland from 1932 to 1937. Had it not been for that fateful audition with the legendary Massine, Bob Irwin's career would probably have paralleled those of the many other Portland-trained dancers who followed Christensen to San Francisco. As it was, Mr. Irwin had a dance career of five years in the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, during the time when that company was the epicenter of creative activity in the sophisticated European world of ballet.

When Bob Irwin received his ticket for passage on a ship that took him through the Panama Canal and across the Atlantic to Monte Carlo, he was going to join a brand-new company, the first of which Massine was sole artistic director. It had been less than ten years since the death of Diaghilev, and the continuous power struggle for control of the Ballet Russe had finally resulted in a split, with Colonel Vasily de Basil in charge of the Original Ballet Russe and Massine, who was at his creative height, directing the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

In January of 1940 Bob Irwin appeared in Portland on tour with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Most of the great dancers of the period were his colleagues in the company at that time. The list includes Alexandra Danilova, Frederic Franklin, Mia Slavenska, Igor Youskevitch, André Eglevsky and Alicia Markova. The repertoire they danced demonstrates the historical importance of his years with the company: Carnaval, Devil's Holiday, Gaîté Parisienne, Schéhérazade, Ghost Town, Spectre de la Rose, Capriccio Espagnol, Boutique Fantasque, L'Après-Midi d'un Faune, Bacchanale and Le Beau Danube. Bob Irwin danced the role he created in 1938 in Massine's wildly popular ballet, Gaîté Parisienne — the part of the dancing master.
DANCE IN PORTLAND

(1911-1993), a cousin of the Christensen brothers, who taught many forms of dance, including tap and ballroom, in his studio on Sandy Boulevard.

Billings is well remembered by the generations of Portlanders for whom his classes in ballroom dancing were a veritable rite of passage in grade school. (Billings’ wife Mary, who ran the dance school with him, relates that he stopped counting the young ballroom students when the number exceeded 100,000!) Musical comedy star of the 1940’s and 1950’s Jane Powell studied dance with him before going to Hollywood.

A Portland couple, Margaret Rogers and Nicholas Vasiliev, who taught ballet here for several decades beginning in the early 1940’s, were in on the founding of two great American dance institutions - San Francisco Ballet and Ballet Theatre (after 1957, American Ballet Theatre).

After several years of study with Portland teacher Katherine Laidlaw, Margaret Rogers went to San Francisco to dance for Adolph Bolm. The great Russian dancer, the first superstar of the Diaghilev Ballets Russes, had been hired as the first ballet master of the San Francisco Opera. Margaret and the young Russian, Vasiliev, were among the 48 dancers in the company who danced in 1933 at the newly built War Memorial Opera House.

Nicholas, who had been a gymnast in Russia before emigrating to the U.S. in the early 1920’s, had a flair for character dancing, creating parts in Bolm ballets such as Le Coq d’Or, The Bartered Bride and Danse Noble. He choreographed Russian Peasant Dance for himself, Margaret Rogers and Virginia Browning in 1935 for the San Francisco company.

When Bolm retired from the Opera in 1937, the Vasilieffs (the couple married in San Francisco) left for New York where they danced in the Mordkin Ballet and studied with Alexandra Fedorova (sister-in-law of Michel Fokine), who was a major exponent of the Russian school and who trained many of the era’s best dancers, including Alicia Alonso, Nora Kaye and Rosella Hightower. After Ballet Theatre was formed by fellow Mordkin dancer Lucia Chase in 1940, the Vasilieff couple opened a school in Portland where Margaret taught while Nicholas continued to dance and tour with the company.

By the late 1940’s Nicholas was back in Portland running the flourishing school while Margaret concentrated on their growing family. The relationship with Fedorova was a major factor in their lives, as the Maryinsky-trained Fedorova and her son, Leon Fokine, came frequently to teach in Portland at the Vasilieff studio.

Mr. Vasiliev taught generations of Portland ballet dancers, forming a concert group for which he choreographed. He was for many years choreographer of the Portland Opera (Queen of Spades, Faust, Tales of Hoffman and The Abduction from the Seraglio), where he worked closely with conductor Eugene Fuerst, who also composed for the concert group. The decade of the 1940’s saw the establishment of a dance department in the Portland Parks Bureau under the guidance of the remarkable Portland educator, Dorothy Lensch, who was Director of Recreation for several decades and whose agenda was to bring dance training to young people who might not have access to it. Dorothy’s first dance teacher here was Professor Generowski at the Turnverein (a health club at 13th and Main that has since been demolished).

From there she followed an academic route, first attending Mills College, then studying pre-medicine at University of Oregon, while continuing to pursue her dance studies with Martha Hill (later the much-respected director of the dance program at Juilliard), who was on the faculty at Oregon in the 1920’s. Before returning to Portland, Dorothy obtained a Masters degree at Wellesley, then studied modern dance with Mary Wigman in Germany and with Harold Kreutzberg, whom she calls “the strongest of all the male dancers I’ve seen.” One of the founders of Portland Opera around 1950, Dorothy Lensch obtained a Doctorate – largely, she says, in order to gain clout in her negotiations for space and funding for her beloved programs with various school superintendents.

Another long-time Portland teacher who opened a school here in the early 1940’s is Marcelle Renoux, a French native who began her dance training in London, then dropped out of school at age 16 to earn a living on the Fanchon and Marco.

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vaudeville circuit in the U.S. She also studied with Eugene Loring in Los Angeles, appeared in movies, then settled down in Portland to teach several different dance disciplines until 1976, when she died at age 63.

Portland supported a large dance community in the 1940's. Many teachers of all forms of dance helped to generate the dance literacy and enthusiasm that created and kept the large audiences who supported the numerous performances of major touring companies that came regularly to the city. In fact, after much scrutiny of earlier periods, this writer is of the opinion that Portland has never been more isolated in terms of access to the repertoire and artists of the wider world of dance than it has been in the 1990's. Oregon Ballet Theatre and James Canfield bear a tremendous educational and cultural responsibility.

Carol Shults, dance teacher, writer, and historian, wrote the libretto for Oregon Ballet Theatre's The Nutcracker and is currently researching the history of dance in Portland.

Special Thanks to Venus Gaffney, who worked on this installment of the history project as research assistant.

Acknowledgement and Thanks
For conversations about the period to:
Christina Hintz, Robert Irwin, Dorothy Irwin, Mary Billings Jameson, Dorothea Lensch, Nina Vasiliev Raimondo, Jacqueline and Fred Schumacher, and Louise Staver.

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San Francisco Ballet, The First Fifty Years by Cobbett Steinberg; Chronicle Books, 1983.

The preceding article is a continuation of a series begun in the playbills of OBT's 1996/97 season. In three installments last season we laid out the intentions and scope of this "History of Dance in Portland" project and followed that history from the early years of the century up to the late 1930's. We would like to reiterate our initial plea for input and correction - hopefully there will someday be a book or a monograph on this subject that can be more exhaustive than this series. In the lower margins of the preceding pages are the names of people who have worked as professional dancers or teachers in Portland or were trained here and went on to careers elsewhere. Copies of the previous articles can be obtained by calling Michael McDonald at (503) 227-0977 ext. 130.