

Spring Performance to Wrap Up A Memorable Season



Two major new works from Ice Theatre of New York's 1990-91 season: above, ensemble members in "Different Trains", choreographed by Rob McBrien. Below, Elena and Vladimir Bogoliubov in "Black Rain."



Ice Theatre of New York culminates its 1990-1991 season with a special performance

Saturday, April 27, 1991

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Sky Rink

460 W. 33rd Street

New York, NY

For ticket information, call (212) 349-6232

To order tickets, see invitation enclosed in this newsletter

***To volunteer to work at the event, call 349-6232**

The 1990-1991 season has been one of our busiest and most productive yet. The season made us a truly international company, with the distinguished addition of Elena and Vladimir Bogoliubov, ice dancers from the Soviet Union. We also saw our efforts to further the relationship between skating and dance come to fruition with a new work, *Angel Part 1*, created for Ice Theatre by acclaimed dance choreographer Ann Carlson. *Angel Part 1* was commissioned by Dancing in the Streets as part of Ice Theatre's ongoing relationship with that dynamic and innovative organization.

We also achieved a great deal of media attention this season, with Ice Theatre events promoted on Fox Television's New York affiliate's morning program, *Good Day New York*, as well as a feature story on ABC-TV's *New York Views*. Word is spreading about the growing connection between skating and dance, and with increasing media coverage of the developments in this area, such as the Boitano/Witt company and various professional competitions and exhibitions, Ice Theatre's pioneering work is receiving new attention as part of this exciting trend.

This season brought us new recognition from the arts community, as Ice Theatre became the first skating company to receive a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in the Dance Category, as well as grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and the Lila Acheson Wallace Theatre Fund.

To celebrate these events, Ice Theatre will present a performance of some of its finest work from this and prior seasons on Saturday, April 27, 1991. The performance will include several ensemble works, and featured skaters will include U.S. Open Professional Challenge Cup Winner Stephanie Grosscup and 1990 World Team member and Skate Canada Artistic Gold Medal winner Norm Proft. The ticket price is \$15.00, with an optional suggested additional donation to Ice Theatre of \$10.00.

1991 EVENTS

JANUARY

- 17 Aspen Winterskol
Aspen, CO
- 19 Opening of Ice Land, Princeton, NJ
- 23 ITNY Repertory Concert #1
The Rink at Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY
- 26 Beaver Dam Winter Sports Club
75th Anniversary Celebration
Locust Valley, NY

FEBRUARY

- 2 Winterlude Festival
Ottawa, Canada
- 13 Dancing On Thin Ice
Performance to benefit Dancing in the Streets
The Rink at Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY
- 16 Performance, Dancing in The Streets
Wollman Rink-Central Park, New York, NY
(also 2/23at Wollman Rink -Prospect Park, Brooklyn, NY)
- 22 Plié Power Workshop
Beaver Dam Winter Sports Club
Locust Valley, NY
- 27 ITNY Repertory Concert #2
The Rink at Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY

MARCH

- 4 Company Rehearsal
SkyRink, New York, NY (also 3/6, 3/11, 3/13, 3/17, 3/20, 3/24, 3/27)
- 8 Celebration of Ice Dancing
Performance to benefit Lar Lubovitch Dance Company
SkyRink, New York, NY
- 20 ITNY Repertory Concert #3
The Rink at Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY
(filmed by CFTO-TV, Toronto, Canada)

APRIL

- 3 Company Rehearsal
SkyRink, New York, NY 10:15-11:15 AM
(also 4/10, 4/17, 4/24)
- 27 Season Finale Performance/Skating Party
SkyRink, New York, NY 6:00 - 8:00 PM

MAY

- 23-25 Plié Power Workshops
PSGA Convention, San Diego, CA

SUMMER

- June ITNY Residency
Sun Valley, Idaho
- Summer Ice Dancing classes through The New School
(for more information, call (212) 741-5615)

Message from the Artistic Director

I was inspired by something that Christopher Dean said in an interview broadcast as part of this season's Nutrasweet World Professional Championships. He said, "Skating choreography, as a dance medium, is still in its infancy. It's what we're trying to experiment with and there's an abundance of ideas and directions to go with it." Dance itself looks back to ancient roots, but dance as an expressive form on ice dates only from the turn of the century. Skating did not move indoors until after World War I; it was about this time that Charlotte appeared in the first indoor theatrical skating production, "Flirting in St. Moritz." Since that time, limited experimentation has crept into the form, which has mostly been given over to spectacles deriving their aesthetic from Hollywood movies. The high cost of skating productions has often discouraged new impulses in their attempt to reach a wide public.

There are ways of moving on ice that we have never seen. The ice is almost another earth, its laws often contradictory to our experiences of gravity and time. The excitement generated by Gary Beacom's skating is all the proof my statement would ever need. Gary moves in ways logical (for him!) on ice, ways that are often illogical for earth, and certainly illogical in terms of "classical" technique. Torvill and Dean, in couple work, do the same thing. They break open our perceptions of what is possible on ice, and reveal truly new ways of moving on skates. There are also things that people would like to see skaters do that skaters themselves would never think of, involved as they must be with the perfection of what they inherit as technique. This is why we seek to involve artists from "earth-dance" in our work.

Artistic skating is a genuinely new art form, one made possible only by the technology of artificial ice. The expressive potentials of ice are only beginning to be tapped, and the relation between the words "motion" and "emotion" hint at the power latent in a form where movement can be sweeping, swift and thrilling. Ice Theatre of New York is committed to exploring this rich frozen medium and to presenting to its audiences the vanguard in the state of the art.

Company Activities

New Work Premieres

On February 13, the Ice Theatre ensemble provided a special performance at "Dancing on Thin Ice", the annual Valentine's Eve Skating Party to benefit Dancing in the Streets, a not-for-profit dance presenting organization devoted to bringing performing arts out of the concert hall into public life. A new work created by contemporary choreographer Ann Carlson was featured. The piece represents Carlson's first venture into ice choreography and evokes the ceremonial quality of a Tibetan procession. The piece was commissioned by Dancing in the Streets with public funds provided by the New York State Council on the Arts. Jack Anderson of the *New York Times* wrote of this performance, "...a remarkable piece...a reminder that the solemnity of a rite need not prevent it from also being an affirmation....first-rate of its kind." Also appearing were Elena and Vladimir Bogliubov, performing Albinoni's *Adagio*, which had its New York premiere at Ice Theatre's first 1991 Rockefeller Center concert on January 27. The performances were repeated on February 16 at Wollman Rink in Central Park, on



photo: Cheryl Gottschall

at "Dancing on Thin Ice". (l. to r. Ann Carlson, Danny Melita, Elise Bernhardt, Palmer Baker, Moira North, Jan Staller)

February 23 in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, and on March 9 at Lasker Rink in Central Park.

Dancing in the Streets was founded by Elise Bernhardt in 1984, growing out of her concern for bringing artists and their work back into the mainstream of American life through free performances in public areas. Bernhardt views free performances as an effective marketing tool for the arts, a means for creating the larger audiences so vital to the arts' success. This season, Dancing in the Streets is scheduled to appear in Los Angeles, at the 20th Street Station in Philadelphia, and at the Marina Towers in Chicago.

The continued collaboration of Ice Theatre with Dancing in the Streets is particularly exciting, as it combines the latter's efforts to make dance more accessible to the public with our efforts to align the popularity of skating more closely with dance forms than its traditional ice-show viewpoint. A number of future joint efforts are currently under development for the 1991-92 season. For more information about Dancing in the Streets, please call (212) 989-6830.

As part of Ice Theatre's role in the development of artistic skating, we welcome ideas on training the next generation of skaters. Pat Jennings, Director of the Skating Club of New York Junior Club, here presents her ideas on accomplishing this development outside the traditional competitive structure.

With the precarious rink situation everywhere, administrators of programs must give serious thought to expansion into new ways to garner interest and support for the art and sport of figure skating. The art of figure skating can be expanded to cultivate performance as well as competitive skaters. Skating cannot and should not survive solely as a "competitor's" sport, subjecting developing skaters to the tremendous anxiety competitive skating causes, anxiety which has been the downfall of a number of talented skaters. A way to alleviate this problem is to encourage "character" skating, which has been explored to a degree in ISIA spotlight competitions, and which I began to explore a few years ago with my own child. The theme of the Skating Club of New York Junior Club holiday show is "Characters." Each child who signed up for the show was assigned a "character" to portray on the ice. The concept is designed to allow the skater to perform as someone of something other than him/herself. This approach can accomplish the following:

- Teach children about someone or something new, or explore music and characters heretofore unexperienced.
- Turn mistakes in the program – a fall, a missed step, etc., into a success by reacting as the child imagines the character would react. For example, if the child's character is Sonja Henie and she falls on an axel, she should think: What would Sonja Henie do? She would get up, glare at the audience, stamp her foot and go on. The apparent failure then becomes a success by being incorporated into the program.
- Create a stress-free way to encourage children to attempt jumps which have not yet been mastered. Without the feeling that marks will be taken off if a jump is not landed, a skater can explore the jump with relative abandon.

Children can have fun skating a program. I had an acting teacher in college who constantly stressed "specificity is of the essence." I think this is also

true in a successful skating program. But probably the most important aspect for the competitive skater is exploring personality and character on the ice. How many times have we watched a skater who was technically wonderful and think "if only there was some spark that would let me know if someone is in there 'cooking', and loving the ice, the music and the night!"

I hope Junior Club can be a forum for this kind of skating and perhaps become a stepping stone to performance skating for them and adults. On June 8, 1991 the Skating Club of New York is planning to host our first Ice Carnival in ten years. We can assure you there will be a character or two in the show.

For more information, please contact Pat Jennings, (212) 947-3680.

Developing the Next Generation

Company Members & Guest Artists

When Patrick Dean arrived in New York in 1981, he fulfilled a dream that began at the age of six in Nottingham England, when he decided to become a teacher. At the age of ten he began his training as a skater, went on to compete for seven years as an amateur in both freestyle and dance, placed fourth in the British Junior Ice Dance Championships, and then moved forward in his dream by turning professional and teaching; first in Bradford, Yorkshire, then at Streatham in London. His teaching career then took him to Bristol, where he witnessed the early growth of Robin Cousins' career, to western Massachusetts, eastern New York State and Connecticut, and then back to London, where he taught for six years at the Queen's Ice Skating Club in Bayswater. While at Streatham, he had placed third with his partner, Perry Horne, in the World Pro Championships at Wembley Stadium. The dancers he trained included Gabriel Biss and David Crafts, who placed in the British Junior Championships and went on to compete in the European international competitions and to establish successful teaching careers in London.

Patrick Dean

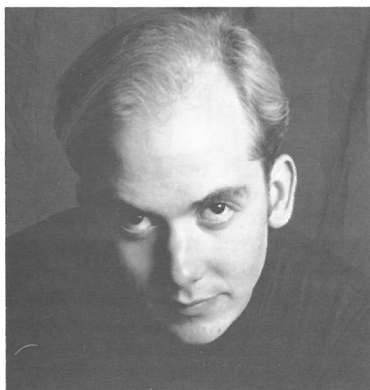


"In 1981 my dream of teaching in the Big Apple came true. It was one of the happiest days of my life; it was like coming home," he writes. He has since established a reputation and record as a master teacher, as an ice dancer with a special clarity of style – and as a special person.

In 1984 Patrick with his "very beautiful partner, Moira North," won first place for their free dance and musicality at the World

Professional Championships in Jaca, Spain. The following year he joined Moira as an original member and stalwart supporter of Ice Theatre. "In the early days Ice Theatre seemed very strange to me, rehearsing numbers at 2 and 3 a.m., of which only the choreographer knew what they were about...but Ice Theatre has grown to a very sophisticated company...it allows me to skate for myself in a group or duet form...apart from which I help a choreographer to achieve those visions during which I can expand my own skating and acting abilities. After studying acting at the Herbert Berghoff School, Ice Theatre allows me to be any character I'm asked to be, whether a Tibetan monk (*Angels, Part 1*) or a train (*Different Trains*), all of which are fun and challenging.

"All this and skating too, along with bringing joy to so many people – what more can a man ask for? Thank you, Ice Theatre of New York!"



James Schilling

"It is exciting to see ice skating in the midst of such change, especially seeing ice dancing, as practiced by professional companies such as Ice Theatre, approaching the creativity and innovation of modern dance", says James Schilling. A competitive ice dancer from 1981 to 1989, James was a four-time U.S. Nationals competitor, winning a Bronze medal in Junior Dance in 1986. He also competed at the 1986 U.S. Olympic Festival.

He has trained with Sandra Hess and Peter Dalby, and participated in an international ice dancing training camp in Oberstdorf, Germany, headed by Betty Calloway and Martin Skotnicky, coaches for Torvill & Dean and the Duchesnays.

"I would like to see solo, pas de deux and ensemble skating incorporated into a single piece, not necessarily narrative, but exploring a single theme. Skating is not dance, but a unique and beautiful art form all its own," he says. James currently appears in the Ice Theatre ensemble works *Angel, Part 1* and *Different Trains*.

Ice Theatre Performs at Lubovitch Gala

On Friday, March 8, 1991, the focus of the dance world was not on the stages of our city but on the ice at SkyRink, where the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company presented its "Celebration of Ice Dancing."

The performance began with "Machines", an innovative exploration of movement performed by Nathan Birch, Pamela Duane and Tim Murphy of The Next Ice Age. Patricia Dodd followed with a swan-like number choreographed to Liszt's "Impromptu in F# Major." David Liu's elegant program to music from the movie "The Mission" would be performed again at the 1991 World Figure Skating Championships in Munich only days later. Elena and Vladimir Bogoliubov performed the acclaimed "Albinoni Adagio", followed by JoJo Starbuck with a new program featuring a timely choice of music, Julie Gold's Grammy-winning "From a Distance" as performed by Bette Midler. Tim Murphy, The Next Ice Age's Artistic Associate Director, then performed "Going Going Gone," a piece which tests the boundaries of gravity in a short study of a skater almost always in the process of falling over. The finale of the performance was the Ice Theatre ensemble performing the unique and avant-garde "Different Trains," an ensemble work choreographed by Rob McBrien.

The internationally-renowned choreographer Lar Lubovitch has created over 50 dances for the concert stage – most recently for the New York City Ballet and the Paris Opera Ballet, as well as for his own company. He also choreographed the memorable ice ballet "The Sleeping Beauty" which starred Robin Cousins and Rosalynn Sumners.

Judy Blumberg, Dick Button, Robin Cousins, Peggy Fleming, Dorothy Hamill, Ken Shelley, Michael Siebert, JoJo Starbuck, and Rosalynn Sumners joined to form the honorary committee in recognition of Lar Lubovitch's contribution to artistic skating choreography. Proceeds from this celebration of ice dancing will help the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company pay for the dancer's health insurance plan and for the company's upcoming New York City performances this summer at Lincoln Center.

Friends – Business & Arts

Elise Bernhardt founded Dancing in the Streets in 1984, with the idea that the performing arts, presented in public settings, should be an integral part of public life. Elise has directed Dancing in the Streets in performance events at such diverse settings as Grand

Elise Bernhardt

Central Terminal, the Staten Island Ferry, the Apollo Theatre in Harlem, and the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

Among her many performance events, Elise produced the first French/American Dance Exchange between emerging choreographers and repertory companies from the U.S. and France. In 1987 she produced a pilot project of free dance and music performances in parks throughout the five boroughs of New York City. The acclaimed Grand Central Dances were conceived as a way of drawing attention to the architectural beauty of New York's Grand Central Station while introducing contemporary choreographers to a diverse public.

Elise's concept of site-specific choreography was born in 1981, when she coordinated the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival touring ensemble. In 1983, she produced the Brooklyn Bridge Dance Festival with 250 dancers and musicians dancing across the bridge in celebration of its Centennial.

A member of the selection committee for the New York Dance and Performance Awards since 1985, Elise also served that year as U.S. representative to the jury of Dance 'a Paris, the first international choreographer's competition in France. She also curated and organized the dance festival for "Celebrate Brooklyn" from 1985-1988 and served on the supervisory committee for the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Majestic Theater in 1987-88. She has been a panelist of the American Dance Guild, the PENTACLE Marketing Project and the FEDAPT conference on fundraising. She was a speaker at the 1988 Dance Critic Association's Conference on "Performances Outside the Proscenium" and served as a panelist at the Dance/USA 1990 International Roundtable.

A Fellowship recipient at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Elise has studied choreography with Bessie Schonberg and Lucia Dugloszewski, and performed with Meredith Monk in New York and Europe.

(for more on Dancing in the Streets, see page 3)

This "Calli-Graphic" silhouette of Gary Beacom is done by artist/skater Rikki Samuels.

If you look closely, you can see the skater's name repeated within the outline of the silhouette. These customized "Calli-Graphic" silhouettes are created from a photograph supplied by the skater or from Rikki's collection of over 300 skating silhouettes. In addition to figure skaters, Rikki has also created these



© 1990 Rikki Samuels

unusual drawings for dancers, gymnasts, tennis players and hockey skaters.

Rikki Samuels

"The skill of calligraphy is so similar to the skill of skating" says Rikki. "Both use a steel instrument that has an outside and inside edge. Applying pressure in different ways to

the steel pen nib to create a curve on paper is similar to laying out a set of school figures on a patch."

Rikki had her first one-woman art show entitled "New York Skaters" in the summer of 1990 at the Epiphany Library in New York City. Her work has been exhibited this season at the Skate House of the Rink at Rockefeller Plaza where she is an instructor.

Ann Carlson is a choreographic artist best known for expanding the context of choreography, performance, and our perceptions. Her blend of movement, vo-

cals, sound and visual elements have brought a strong new voice to the dance and performance world. Her first series-format work, "Real People", began in 1985. Its first work, *Sloss, Kerr, Rosenberg & Morre*, was created with four lawyers. Other works in this series include security officers, basketball players, a mother and daughter, fly-fishers, fiddlers, and corporate executives. Carlson was awarded a 1988 New York Dance/Performance Award for her second series, "Animals". Recently she staged "Hydrogen Jukebox", a new opera by composer Philip Glass with libretto by Allen Ginsberg, to open at the Brooklyn Academy of Music this Spring. Ann is currently working on a new series of performance and dance works entitled "While", which explores the impact of American popular culture on the experiences of love. "Angel, Part 1" represents Ann's first venture into ice choreography.

Ann Carlson



Ann Carlson's "Angel, Part 1" at its debut at the Dancing in the Streets Valentine's Day Skating Party

North By Northwest: President's Report

Since one of the major mandates of Ice Theatre has been (and continues to be) the exploration of choreographic possibilities on the ice, I also feel that we should provide a forum for discussion of the various points of view and problems which arise in this process. In the dance world the points of protocol are well-defined and provide guidelines for giving credit where it is due. We in the skating world have yet to draw up similar guidelines.

In the last "Cutting Edge" Frank Nowosad, Canada Ice Dance Theatre's co-director, spoke about "Alberta Biography," which he choreographed for/with Gary Beacom. In this issue, we have a response from skater/performer Gary Beacom.

What do you think?

Growing Out of Egocentrism

by Gary Beacom

Just how much credit ought to be awarded to a performer and how much to a choreographer? What is the ideal choreographer-performer relationship? And what can be accomplished through choreography? Certain presumptions that I find erroneous have become prevalent, in both dance and skating, about the choreographer's relationship to the finished program. Frank Nowosad's *Cutting Edge* article, "Is this Frank Nowosad, Gary Beacom, or Something More?" provides a clear example of such attitudes.

My feeling has always been that the quality of motion in harmony with music forms the basis of our appreciation of dance. This is a direct manifestation of the consciousness of the dancer: his discipline, his dialectical and intuitive abilities, his health, his balance; in short, his energy level and commitment. A good performer can bring even the most uninspired and haphazard choreography to life by understanding this significance, but no amount of cleverly-devised creativity and compositional brilliance will enable an unenlightened dancer to move an audience.

I am baffled by Mr. Nowosad's claim that "...the motivation for almost all of the movement in *Alberta Biography* originates in the personal", since perhaps three-quarters of the movement was drawn from the repertoire that I have developed over the course of my skating career. It also assumes an unwarranted credit for the success of the piece.

A truly elite performer needs no choreographer (except in group works) because he is by definition an autonomous adult with his own expressive priorities and creative impulses. The role of a choreographer for an adolescent dancer is to suggest music and concepts, set movement, and impart to the dancer as much insight as possible into the entire process with regard to unification, coherence, theme, etc. Any shortcomings in the performer's understanding of all aspects of the piece will be reflected in the performance, since the choreographer has absolutely no presence on stage apart from the dancer.

Frank's admission that "each movement was...not always explained or justified to the performer" makes a farce out of the choreographic process. How could I convey a meaningful chronology of personal facts about Frank Nowosad's life when I wasn't

even informed until well after the work was completed and premiered that this was a "biography"?

Furthermore, from spectating upon a dancer, one can appreciate universal realities such as maturity, masculinity, sense of humor, social responsibility, intelligence, or philosophy. One can also read emotions: joy, love, fear, sorrow, or anger. One can scarcely glean information, though, about the particulars of his personal life – the size of his house, his hobbies, or his having been bitten by a bumble bee in early childhood. Dance is simply not an appropriate medium to convey specific ideas or events. If you want a story, turn to history, literature, drama, or gossip.

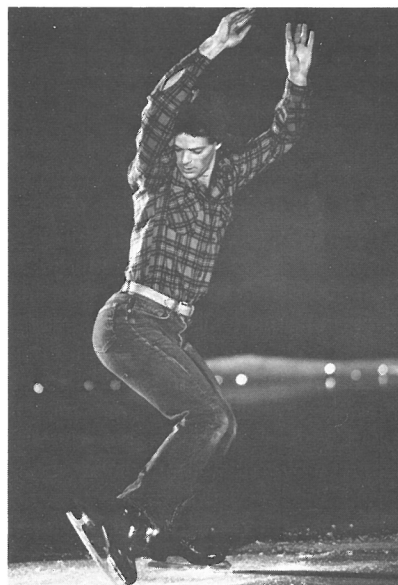
By failing to respect this limitation in the dance medium, choreographers and audiences alike are close to embracing pretentiousness. Is art really an expression of inexplicable randomness and self-indulgent free-association? Do a few

the quality of motion in harmony with music forms the basis of our appreciation of dance. ... A good performer can bring even the most uninspired and haphazard choreography to life by understanding this significance, but no amount of cleverly-devised creativity and compositional brilliance will enable an unenlightened dancer to move an audience.

patchy details of Frank Nowosad's life, which no spectator will ever decipher in *Alberta Biography*, deserve mention in a critique?

Skating to the bird calls was a great idea and a lot of fun. Many such songs suggest personifications such as glee, solemnity, delirium or rage; or symbolism such as the wisdom of an owl. Others are melodic and dancelike. My aim, as I saw it, in rendering the piece, was to allow these songs to dictate the sensibility and rhythm of the movement – not always a straightforward task, but interesting enough to share with an audience.

Frank Nowosad can no more convince me that the spectator will try to glean information, factual or fictional, about the choreographer's life from anyone's reading of this work, than that the earth has more than one axis.



Gary Beacom in
"Alberta Biography"



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ABOUT THE COMPANY

Ice Theatre of New York was formed in 1984 as the nation's first not-for-profit skating performance ensemble. Modeled on the structure of contemporary dance and theatre companies, Ice Theatre of New York has three primary aims: the creation of an innovative repertory of skating performance pieces, the training of an ensemble of skilled professional skaters and the formation of a broader educational arm which reaches out to competitive and recreational skaters of all ages. With ongoing performances in the tri-state area and internationally, as well as collaboration with choreographers, musicians, artists, and designers, Ice Theatre brings together a wealth of artistic talents to create and perform new works.

In addition to creating artistic projects for performance, Ice Theatre is dedicated to the implementation of Ice Theatre Workshops. These classes focus on ensemble work, incorporating elements of dance and theatre and emphasizing musicality. ITNY Workshops are currently sponsored by Manhattan's Sky Rink and a workshop-demonstration format has toured the U.S., providing an audition base for the company roster. Generating great enthusiasm in the skating community, these workshops are attended regularly by acclaimed professionals including Michael Seibert, Judy Blumberg, Gary Beacom, and JoJo Starbuck, along with developing skaters - both amateur and recreational.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ice Theatre of New York wishes to thank the contributions of all its members. We especially wish to acknowledge the continuing support of the following:

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The Curtis McGraw Foundation

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The Cutting Edge welcomes article-length submissions of interest to the skating and dance community.

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