

pøppy





From the Director of the MLC Theatre Royal Company . . .

We believe it is important to provide as much variety as possible in theatrical entertainment and it is with this in mind that we welcome our first association with The Dance Company of N.S.W. in the spectacular full-length production of Poppy — seen by many as a milestone in modern dance in Australia.

Paul Dainty and Garry Van Egmond, the producers who brought you Doctor in Love last year, make a welcome return with their new blockbuster, Love Thy Neighbour, currently one of the hottest properties on Sydney television, due to commence on April 21.

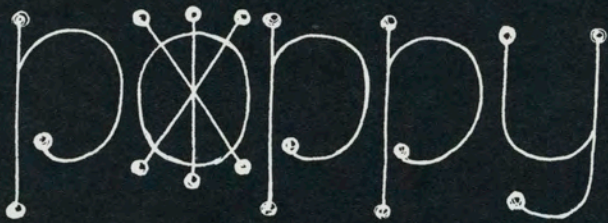
We are pleased to announce the presentation in association with Parachute Productions and the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, of the Melbourne Theatre Company's much acclaimed production Dusa Fish Stas and Vi for a short four-week season. This is a play with an all female cast that every man should see and every woman will identify with. It is about four very different, independent young women sharing a flat in London. Bound by a common concern about the way they spend their lives and the mismanagement which circumstances and their natures force upon them, they help each other out as best they can—with humanity, compassion and imagination. It is directed by George Ogilvie who renews his association with the old Theatre Royal where he directed Conduct Unbecoming. This is the third subsidised theatre company which we have hosted for 1978, and it is my sincere desire that this trend will firmly establish itself in the operation of the Theatre Royal in the future.

It is with great pleasure I am able to announce that, under the auspices of Lend Lease and MLC, a production company has been formed, known as the MLC Theatre Royal Company. Its prime purpose is to ensure that the Theatre Royal remains active at all times, and to provide for you, our patrons, the very best that there is to offer, both from local and overseas sources.

I do hope you enjoy Poppy, and I look forward to your valued patronage in the coming months.

I would mention for the benefit of patrons our car park (entering from King Street) is now open for business.

FREDERICK J. GIBSON



... The Life and Art of Jean Cocteau

A Dance-Theatre Experience
 Choreography and Production **Graeme Murphy**
 Music **Carl Vine**

Visuals and Set Design George Gittoes
 Production Co-ordination and Set Construction
 Ross Barnett

Co-Creator of Visuals Gabrielle Dalton
 Lighting Design Laraine Wheeler
 Technical Manager Brian McLeod
 Stage Manager Gordon Brown
 Wardrobe Ivy Johnson

Cabaret Costumes Sita Stannard
 Wardrobe Assistant Rod Bavaro

Puppets Joe Gladwin,
 by special arrangement with The Marionette Theatre of Australia
 Living Effects Trained by Colin Russell
 Body Builders by arrangement with American Health
 Studios

The Dance Company:

Artistic Director: Graeme Murphy
 Administrator: Michael Goodwin
 Ballet Mistress: Janet Vernon
 Publicity: Janine Kyle
 Bookkeeper: Christine Lenton
 Secretary: Lee Kirkland
 Dancers: Jennifer Barry, Sheree da Costa, Ramli
 Ibrahim, Merrilee Macourt, James McArdle, Christopher
 Morley, Glenda Morley, Ross Philip, Victoria Taylor,
 Andris Toppe, Nina Veretennikova, Janet Vernon,
 Graeme Watson.

*Special Guest Artist: Robert Olup

*Soprano, Act 1, Scene 1: Maureen Smee

Pianist: Carl Vine

Programme designed by Brian Crowther

The New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music has generously
 aided The Dance Company in the preparation of recorded electronic
 music in this evening's programme. We wish to thank the Board of
 Governors and members of the Conservatorium for this assistance.

The Dance Company gratefully acknowledges the support and co-
 operation of the following organisations in the preparation of "Poppy":
 The Australian Government through the Theatre Board of the Australia
 Council.

The State Government of New South Wales through the Division of
 Cultural Activities — Minister, The Hon. Neville K. Wran, O.C.

The Sydney City Council — The Rt. Hon. the Lord Mayor of Sydney,

Alderman Leo Port, M.B.E.

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The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

The Dance Company Movement.

The New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music.

American Health Studios.

Jacqueline Huie.

Ron Lowe.

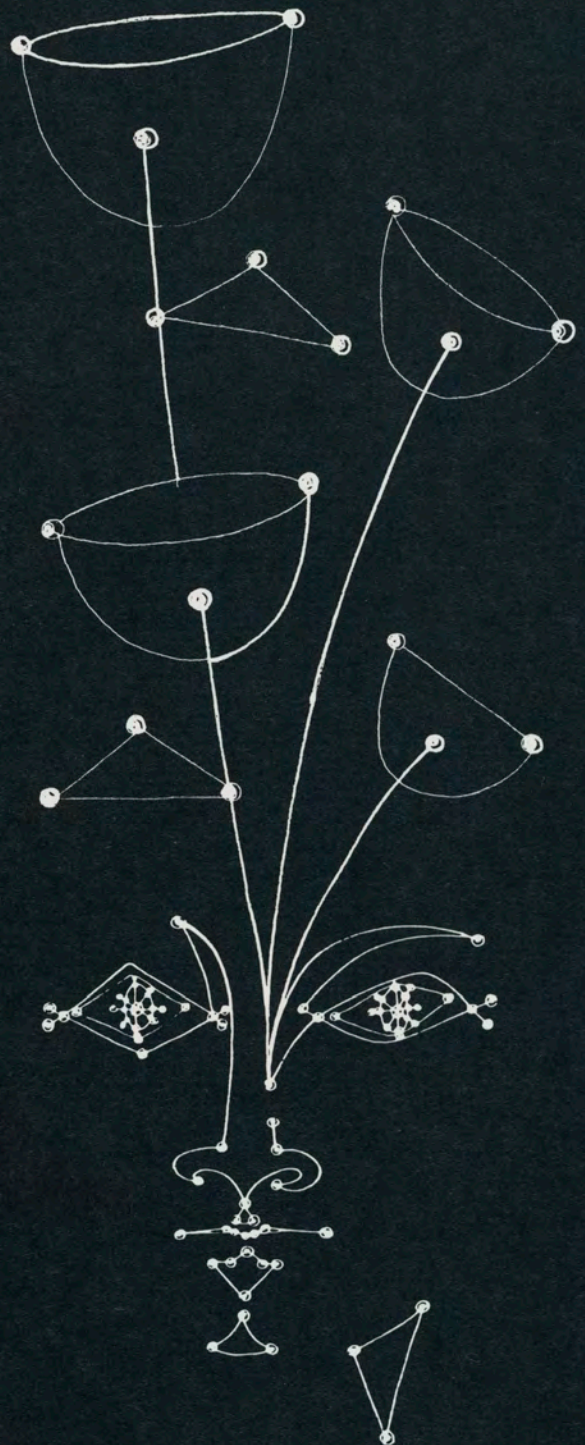
The Australian Music Centre.

Sidney Londish

James Fairfax, M.A.

Macquarie University

TAA



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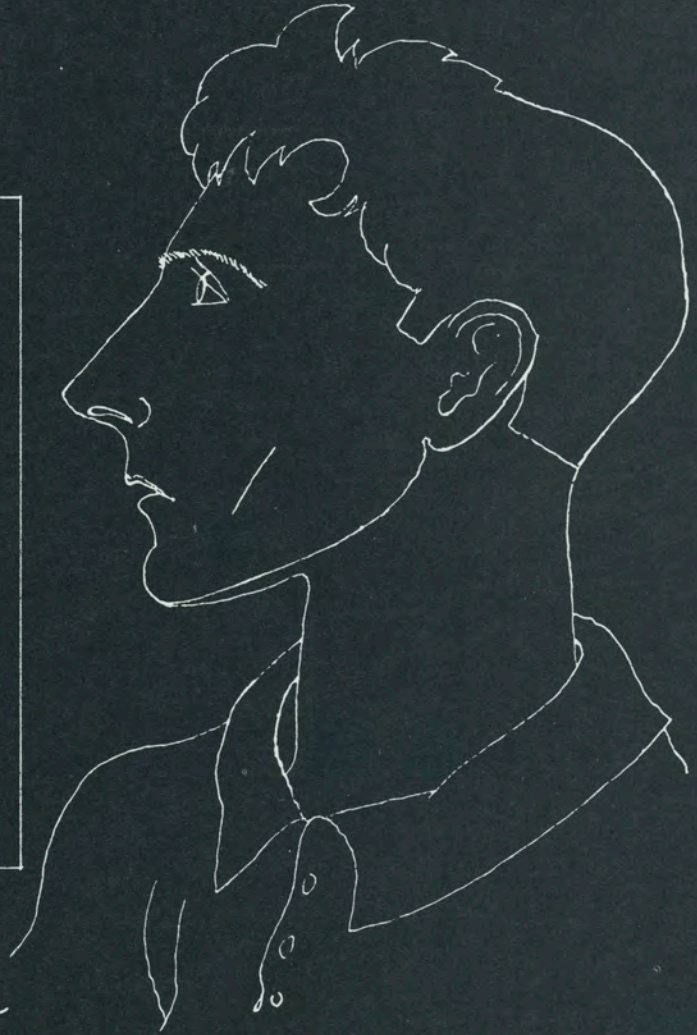
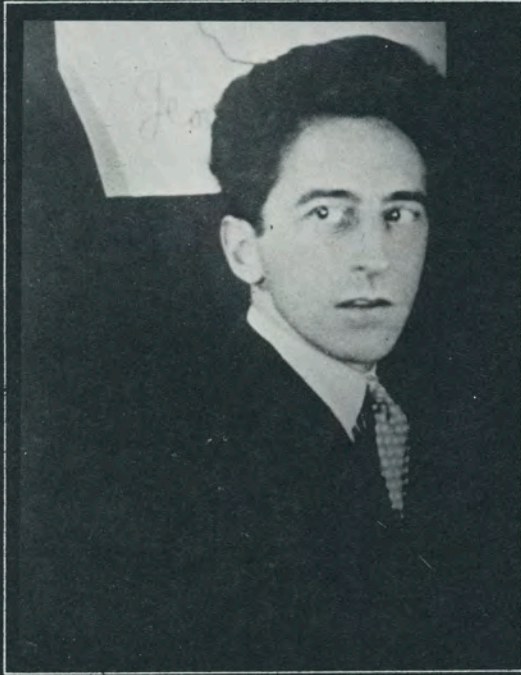
Brian Scanlen, F.C.I.S., F.A.S.A.

Joseph Skrzynski.

Maurice Timbs.

Margaret Whitlam.

Cover drawing by George Gittoes



★ Jean Cocteau

"I have been accused of jumping from branch to branch. Well, I have — but always in the same tree."

Jean Cocteau was one of the most original and protean artists of the Twentieth Century. He was a writer, of course: of novels and plays and poems, essays and journals, criticism and memoirs. He was also a painter and sculptor. He designed for the theatre, he created tapestries and pottery. His name was linked with The Ballet Russes for his scenario for *Le Dieu Bleu* and his remarkable conception of *Parade*.

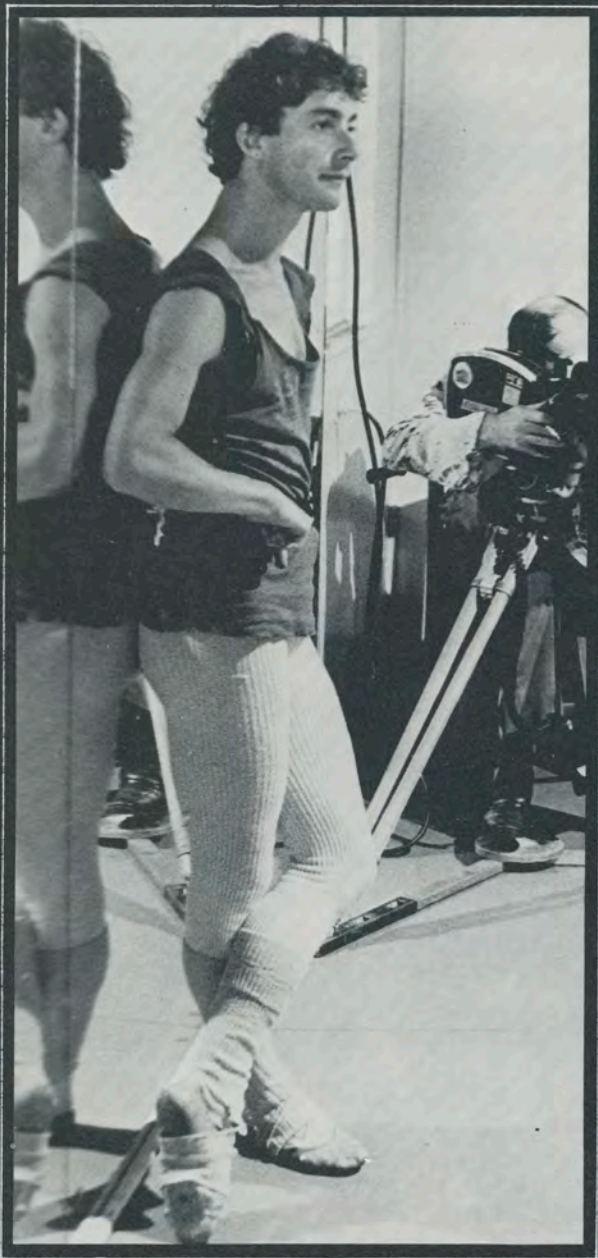
And yet today, fifteen years after his death, it appears that it will be less by his many and varied works that Jean Cocteau will be remembered than by his personality and his legend. Of all the titles to which Jean Cocteau could have made claim, he insisted upon only one — that of poet. Cocteau believed in the "invisibility" of the poet. "Invisibility seems to me a *sine qua non* of elegance. Elegance ceases to exist once it is noticed. . . ." Yet Jean Cocteau was the most "noticed" man in France. Photographs and articles appeared constantly in newspapers and magazines for half a century.

Cocteau's versatility is further in evidence in his extraordinary films. "There is nothing more glorious than to write a poem with people, faces, hands, lights, objects, arranging them all as one likes." Cocteau's films are now universal classics. "*The Blood of a Poet*", admitted Cocteau, "was a visual poem for fifty film connoisseurs. Only slowly, and abroad, did it become a film 'classic'. At that time the movies were the movies — they weren't the Louvre. I made *The Blood of a Poet* alone, like Méliès. I invented a technique."

Funds for the financing of Cocteau's last film, *The Testament of Orpheus*, came partly from Francois Truffaut, who donated the prize money he had won for his film *The Four Hundred Blows*. Cocteau has been called "the true celebrity and progenitor of the new wave."

"When I admire a painter, people tell me, 'Yes, but that's not painting! When I admire a composer, people tell me, 'Yes, but that's not music! When I admire a playwright, people tell me, 'Yes, but that's not theatre.' . . . Then I would ask, 'But what is it?' My interlocutor hesitated . . . murmured: 'I don't know . . . it's something else.'"

"I have finally realised that this something else is, after all, the best definition of poetry."



Graeme Murphy

Graeme Murphy was appointed Artistic Director to The Dance Company in November 1976. During 1977 he mounted four of his established works on the company including "Glimpses", based on the world of Norman Lindsay which won the Canberra Times Award the previous year. New works created especially for The Dance Company include "Tip" and "Fire Earth Air Water". In February 1978 Graeme received The National Critics Circle Award for his work as both Director and Choreographer for The Dance Company in 1977. Immediately following "Poppy" Graeme will commence a new commissioned work for The Australian Ballet.

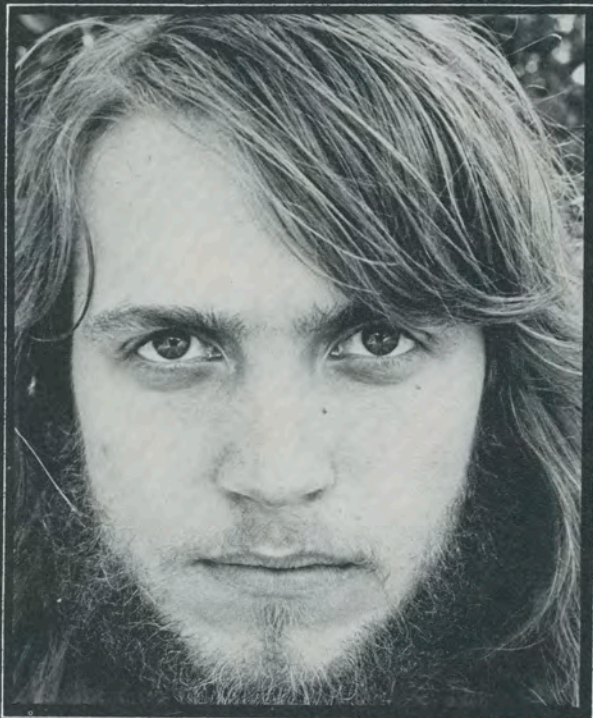
Some seven years ago, through the enthusiasm of a friend, my interest in Jean Cocteau began. That interest has developed considerably, and still, though my life seems currently saturated in the poet's prolificity, the fascination has not diminished. I have been asked why I chose Cocteau, a subject which may seem odd for an Australian company and choreographer. My only reply is that I am unable to resist a source of imagination so rich and original that it transcends patriotism. The poet is able to rearrange, design and place words so that they cease to be mere words. In a similar manner I have taken the dancer's vocabulary, altered and arranged it in such a way that "Poppy" resembles a Cocteau-esque poem. Unlike Jean Cocteau, I lack tenacity, and would take this opportunity to thank all those associated with the production for their constant encouragement, and the dancers, Les Enfants Terribles, who made my work a joy.



Carl Vine

Carl Vine was born in Perth in 1954. He studied trumpet and piano from a very early age, and started to compose music in his early teens. He studied first science and then music at The University of Western Australia, and, since 1974, has worked as a freelance composer and performer. He was selected by the Australia Council for the last "National Composers Training Scheme" in 1975, and then as musical representative for Australia at the "Gulbenkian Choreographic Summer School" held in England in 1976. Carl is currently composer in residence at The Dance Company.

Music Note: The music for the first act of "Poppy" is a "pastiche" — a "parody" in the original and best sense of the word — of Cocteau's own musical influences: Satie and Stravinsky, Poulenc Milhaud and Auric even Wagner makes an appearance. The second act I have taken to be the ultimate extension of the "internal" Cocteau — every conceivable ramification of what is Cocteau-esque. Electronic music seems to me the finest quintessence of the quality that so fascinated Cocteau concerning mechanical devices. Surrounded by mechanical process, one is submerged in a non-natural (hence "magical") environment in which one is left only with imagination.

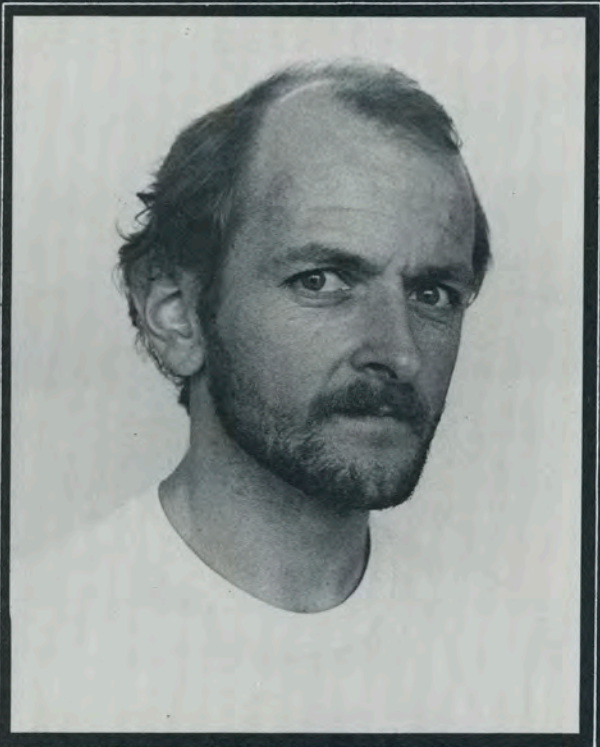




George Gittoes ✕ Gabrielle Dalton

The work of Australian Artist George Gittoes is difficult to define. He is a writer, a poet, a photographer, a painter and now a filmmaker. His photographs and paintings have been exhibited in one-man shows at the Coventry Gallery in Sydney, the Brummels Gallery in Melbourne, The Macquarie Gallery in Sydney and the Solander Gallery in Canberra as well as an exhibition at The Town Hall during The Festival of Sydney. His film "Rainbow Way", made in 1977, has been shown at both the Sydney and Melbourne Film Festivals. At present George is working on a new film "Point Omega". His experiments with holography, the newest art form, have been widely publicised. Working with twenty-five year old Arts honour graduate Gabrielle Dalton on "Poppy" he is striving towards a more visual expression in theatre.

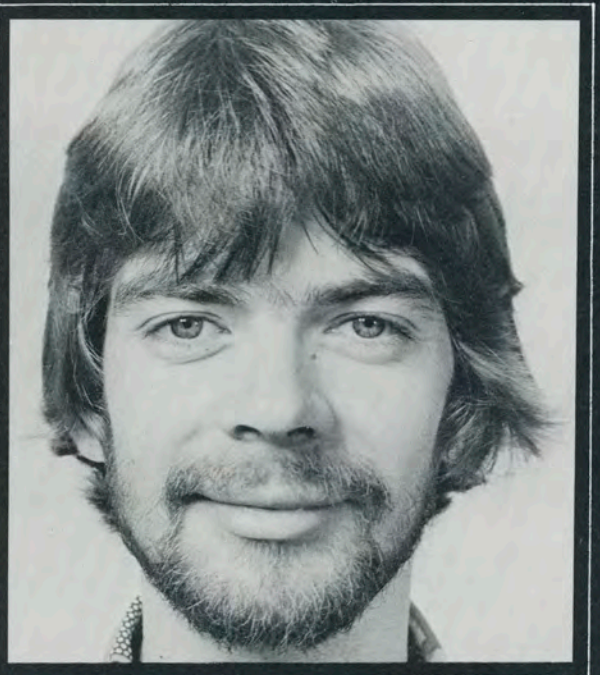
Cocteau loved technical innovation in his films and used every feature of the equipment available to reach his meaning. Filming in reverse, projecting the negative and time lapse, beautifully controlled in slow motion. He would no doubt delight in seeing us use modern movie cameras to extend his experiments, fibreglass to create living sculptures, integrating a laser into a live performance and using a simulated hologram of his face. All the visual images in "Poppy", from painting the sets and props to making the film, have come to us with such a harmonious flow, that at times we felt Cocteau himself was our muse. For us "Poppy" is an attempt to integrate a wide range of contemporary visual art mediums — dance, music and technology — in a way which will help break down the barriers between these specialist disciplines, and move toward a new kind of visual theatre.



Ross Barnett

As a graphic designer, Ross Barnett first worked with The Dance Company, and choreographer Graeme Murphy in 1977 on both "Tip" and "Fire Earth Air Water". The visual concept of the production of "Poppy" has been very much a team effort, with Ross co-ordinating and building the sets.

Undoubtedly, Poppy is our most ambitious collaboration. This production is the first full length contemporary dance work ever presented in Australia. Since the conclusion of the company's last major season in 1977, we have all worked solidly in the staging of The Dance Company's most elaborate undertaking to date.



Joe Gladwin

Joe Gladwin was born in England where he trained as a puppeteer with the London based "Theatre of Puppets". He has worked with major marionette companies in England as well as in television, including a series with Michael Bentine. Joe has made puppets anywhere and everywhere, even at a camping site in Luxembourg, and performed exclusively for The Marionette Theatre of Australia since arriving in Sydney two years ago.

It has been an ambition to work with dancers for some years. The parallel between the preparation of a ballet and a puppet programme is astonishingly similar and, on many occasions, I have noticed how the approach to problems of staging and choreography have crossed direct paths on all levels of production. Theatre of movement, where ideas are conveyed without dialogue, can be very potent. None more so than the puppet and dance theatres. The combination of these two elements can only serve to strengthen the concept and pave the way to greater experimentation.

*Le Voyager
dans les glaces...*

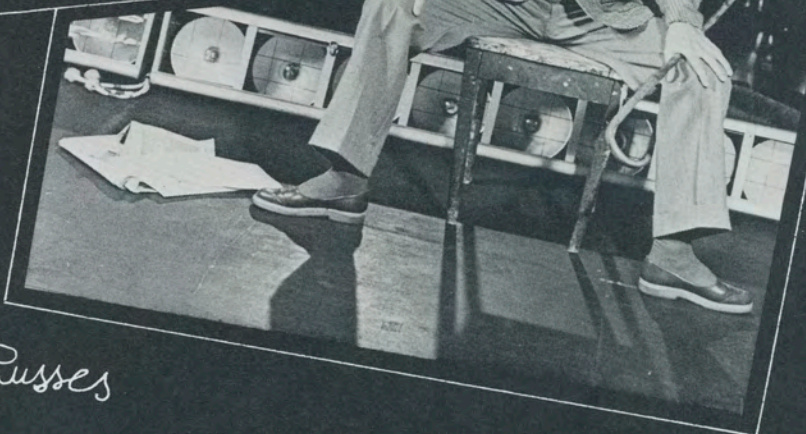


Photo of Les Six by Lipnitzki

Spéctre de la Rose



*Cocteau with
Les Six*



*Souvenirs of
the Ballet Russes*

ACT 1

We see Cocteau as a child with his mother, then in the strangely erotic world of his pubescence. Dargelos, the handsome boy-vamp of Cocteau's schooldays, recurs frequently in Cocteau's poetry.

He emerges next as the poet of the salons, darling of the chic cafe society and idoliser of semi-mythical characters such as the transvestite aerialiste, Barbette. When the Ballet Russes, under the direction of Serge Diaghilev, came to Paris in 1909, Cocteau was mesmerized and inevitably found himself in the wings, a few yards from the performance of *"Le Spectre de la Rose"* and the scandalous premiere of Stravinsky's *"Rite of Spring"*. Cocteau was fascinated by the aesthetic of Diaghilev's troupe and more than interested in the premier danseur and choreographer (respectively) of these ballets — Vaslav Nijinsky.

The next major event in Cocteau's life was the appearance of the precocious author Raymond Radiguet. Cocteau met sixteen year old Radiguet in 1919. He quickly realised Radiguet's potential and helped to introduce the young poet to suitable artistic circles. Their relationship grew, but Cocteau's love became almost suffocating and Radiguet retaliated by living extravagantly — *"a bottle of whisky and a bottle of gin a day"*.

Cocteau virtually forced Radiguet to complete his two great works, *"Le Diable au Corps"* and *"Le Bal de Comte d'Orgel"*. But Radiguet grew further from Cocteau. He was (to use Cocteau's own symbolism) taken by the Angel of Death. He died of typhoid at the age of twenty. Cocteau was prostrate with grief.

Cast of characters:

Mme. Cocteau/Janet Vernon.

"It is possible that my long childhood, which wears the mask of adulthood, comes to me from my mother, whom I resemble."

Jean Cocteau, as a child/Anthony Partos. or David Prudham.

Jean Cocteau, as a man/Graeme Murphy.

"I am a lie that always tells the truth."

Dargelos/Ross Philip.

"... he had the beauty of an animal, of a tree, of a stream, that insolent beauty which is only heightened by filth ... he was the school vamp. He dazzled, disdained, despised us all ..."

Barbette/Robert Olup.

"... he walked tightrope high above the audience without falling — above incongruity, death, bad taste, indecency, indignation."

Isadora Duncan/Janet Vernon.

Vaslav Nijinsky/Ramli Ibrahim.

"... you would never believe that this balding little monkey, in his long overcoat and a hat perched on the top of his skull, was the public's idol ... on stage, his excessive musculature became sinuous. His height increased ... his hands turned into the foliage of his gestures, and his face — his face glowed."

Tamara Karsavina/Sheree da Costa.

Serge Diaghilev/Robert Olup.

"Serge Diaghilev seemed to be wearing the tiniest hat in the world. If you put it on it engulfed your ears ... his head was so enormous that anything he wore on it was too small ... his face was a mastiff's, his smile a baby crocodile's ... his watery eyes slanted downwards in their sockets like oysters ... his only luxury was to discover a star."

Raymond Radiguet/Graeme Watson.

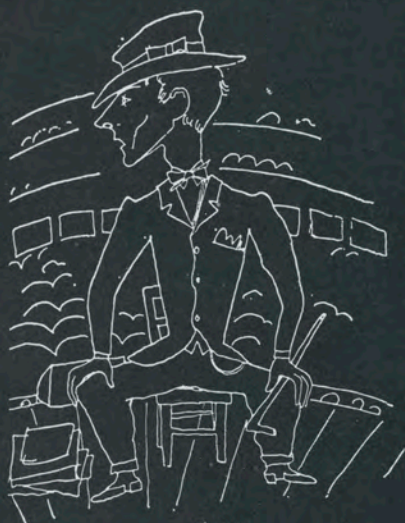
"You know what I mean by 'Heaven's gloves': In order to touch us without defiling itself, heaven sometimes wears gloves. Raymond Radiguet was one. His form fitted heaven like a glove. When heaven takes out its hand, that is death."

Death/Jennifer Barry.

"I shall tell you the secret of secrets. Mirrors are the doors by which death comes and goes. Don't tell this to anyone. Just watch yourself all your life in a mirror and you will see death at work like bees in a glass hive ..."

Song: Scene 1, Act 1.

"On s'angoisse de la tresse acquise par le cyclone où respirant ces âmes tragiques et légères. Cela débute par les enfantillages; on n'y voit d'abord que des jeux."



ACT 2

The second act deals with Cocteau's art — his "poetry", which may be prose, drama, aphorism, sketch, sculpture or cinema. We are now concerned with Cocteau's mind.

After Radiguet's death Cocteau sought solace in opium. He became addicted, but not so completely that he did not seek cure. He underwent a series of "disintoxications", Act II opening in a clinic where Cocteau is in the throes of withdrawal.

When he emerged from disintoxication it was a new Cocteau. He produced poetry prolifically and his work showed more and more maturity. "Poppy" borrows freely from this mature work: from "Parade", the concept of a realistic ballet (the work for which Apollinaire coined the term surrealist); from "Les Mariés de la Tour Eiffel", a juxtaposition of absurd and/or related images; from the plays ("Orphee", "Les Chevaliers de la Table Ronde" and "La Machine Infernale") — characters, plots and symbols; and from his films and plastic art forms — shapes, notions and even more symbols. Leitmotifs occur in all of Cocteau's work: The concept of Gods as wheels within wheels; the absurdity of mirrors; myth, ancient and modern; and the ever present Angel of Death and her attendants.

Ultimately Cocteau is embodied in his own image of Galahad — he is the pure poet.

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Jean Cocteau/Graeme Murphy.

Nurses/Nina Veretennikova, Victoria Taylor, Sheree da Costa, Merrilee Macourt, Glenda Morley.

Galahad/Victoria Taylor.

Guinevere/Merrilee Macourt.

Merlin/James McArdle.

Oedipus/Ross Philip.

Jocasta/Janet Vernon.

Tiersias/Ramli Ibrahim.

Death/Sphinx/Jennifer Barry.

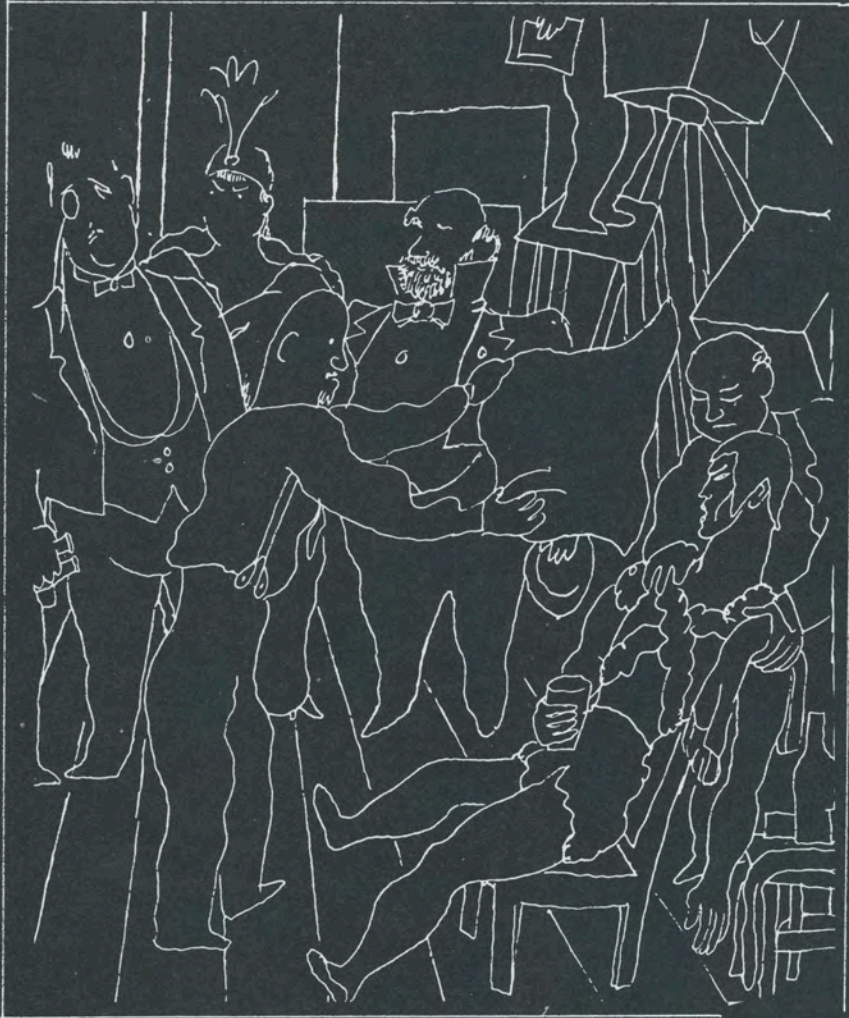
Cegeste/Robert Olup.

L'Ange Heurtebise/Graeme Watson.

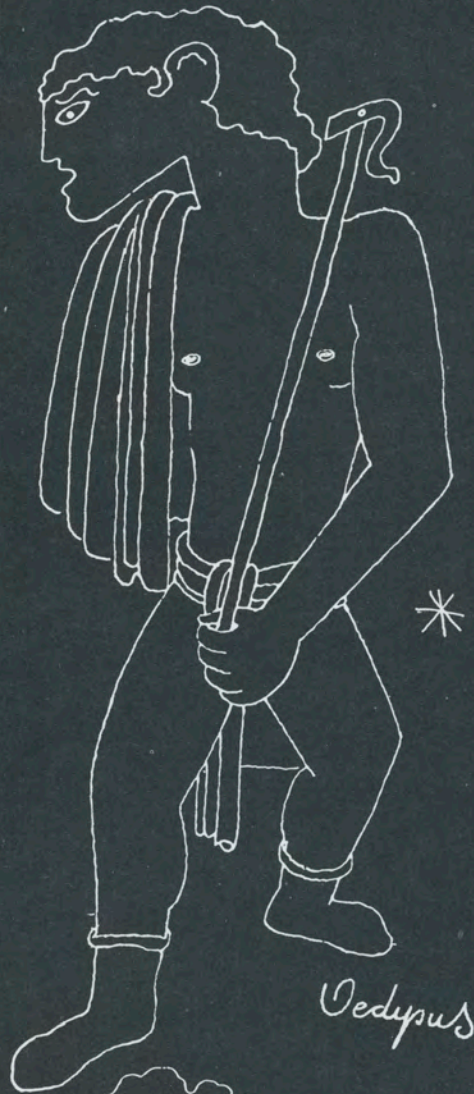
Orpheus/Christopher Morley.

Eurydice/Nina Veretennikova.





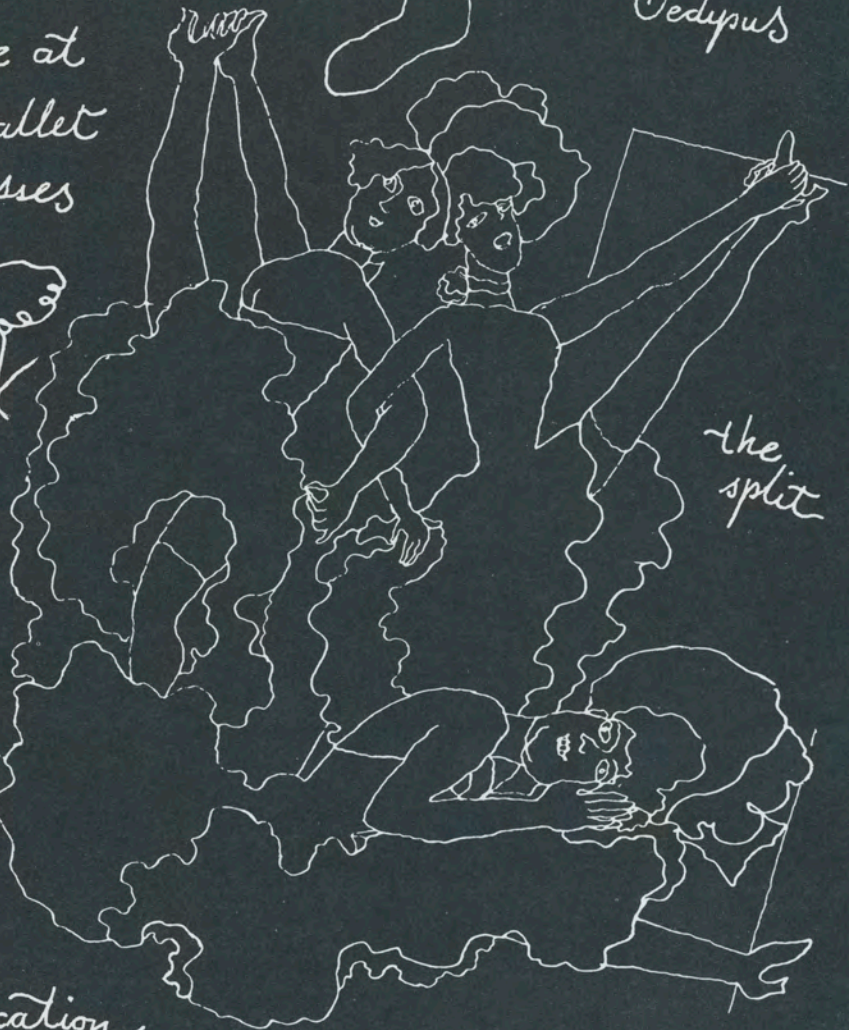
Backstage at
the Ballet
Russes



Oedipus



Disintoxication



the split

Ballet Mistress: Janet Vernon



Dancers

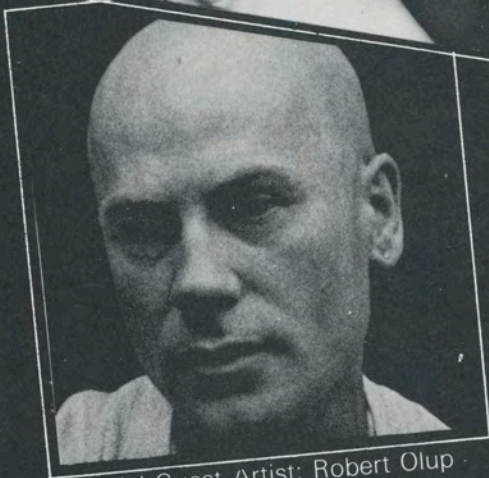
Jennifer Barry,



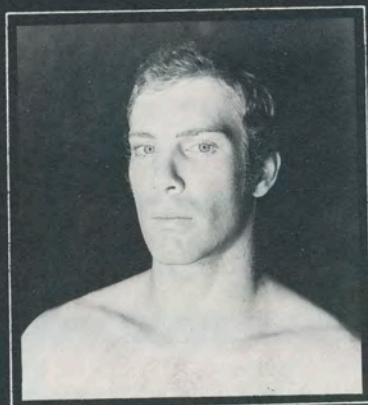
Sheree da Costa,



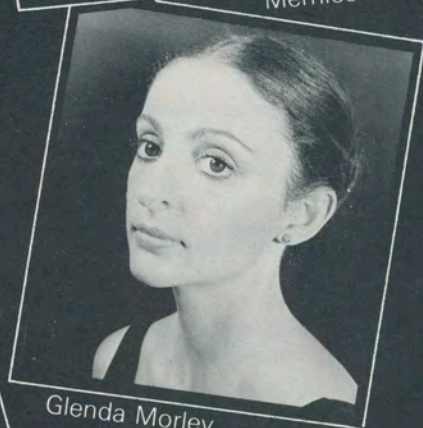
Merrilee Macourt



Special Guest Artist: Robert Olup



Christopher Morley



Glenda Morley



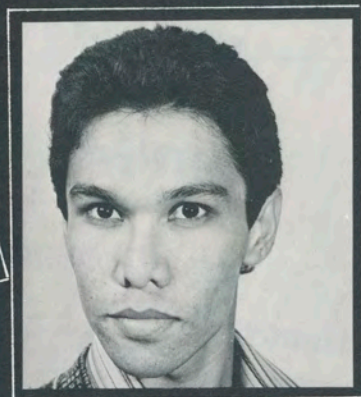
James McArdle



Andris Toppe,



Ross Philip



Ramli Ibrahim



Victoria Taylor



Nina Veretennikova,



Graeme Watson

Choreography and Production

Graeme Murphy

Music Carl Vine

Visuals George Gittoes

Assistant to the Choreographer and Producer Janet Vernon

ACT 1

Mme. Cocteau	Janet Vernon
Jean Cocteau as a child	David Prudham
Jean Cocteau as a man	Graeme Murphy
Dargelos	Ross Philip
Schoolboys	Ramli Ibrahim, James McArdle, Christopher Morley
Barbette	Robert Olup
Can-Can Dancers	Merrilee Macourt, Victoria Taylor, Andris Toppe
Cabaret Dancers	Artists of The Dance Company
Isadora Duncan	Janet Vernon
Vaslav Nijinsky	Ramli Ibrahim
Tamara Karsavina	Sheree da Costa
Serge Diaghilev	Robert Olup
Ballet Russe Dancers	Artists of The Dance Company
Raymond Radiguet	Graeme Watson
Death	Jennifer Barry
Farmhands, Waiters, Attendants to Barbette	Chris Baxter, Robert Hartman, Michou Lacroix Conn Pavlidis

I N T E R V A L

ACT 2

Jean Cocteau	Graeme Murphy
Nurses	Victoria Taylor, Nina Veretennikova, Sheree da Costa, Merrilee Macourt, Glenda Morley
Galahad	Victoria Taylor
Guinevere	Merrilee Macourt
Merlin	James McArdle
Oedipus	Ross Philip
Jocasta	Janet Vernon
Tiersias	Ramli Ibrahim
Orpheus	Christopher Morley
Eurydice	Nina Veretennikova
Death/Sphinx	Jennifer Barry
Cegeste	Robert Olup
Heurtebise	Graeme Watson
Les Enfants Terribles	Artists of The Dance Company
Glazier	Michou Lacroix
Body Builders	Conn Pavlidis, Chris Baxter

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