

Claid, Lansley, and Prestidge questioned stereotypical images of women in dance in their *Bleeding Fairies* (1977). Early choreographed several pieces exploring the emotional relationships of men. He also put his Royal Ballet training to use in *Naples* (1978), a tribute to August Bournonville's great nineteenth-century ballet *Napoli*, but with a twentieth-century setting. He and Lansley reinterpreted another classic in their *I, Giselle* (1980), a feminist retelling of the familiar scenario in which Count Albrecht, rather than Giselle, goes mad and dies. Claid danced *Making a Baby* (1979) when she was seven months pregnant and intended the work to be a sharing of her personal experiences with her audience.

Other choreographers also rose to prominence in Britain. Although American-born, Robert North was largely British trained (at both the Royal Ballet School and London Contemporary). He developed into a versatile choreographer, working with Rambert and London Contemporary as well as with several ballet companies. His *Troy Game*, a spoof of machismo and muscle-building created for London Contemporary in 1974, became an international hit, finding its way into the repertoires of such companies as Dance Theater of Harlem and the Royal Ballet.

Ian Spink had been a member of the Australian Ballet and the contemporary-based Dance Company of New South Wales and had already begun to choreograph when he left his native Australia to participate in the International Course for Choreographers and Composers, which Robert Cohan directed at the University of Surrey in 1977. He has lived in the United Kingdom since then. With Richard Alston and Siobhan Davies, Spink founded Second Stride in 1982 and became its sole director in 1988. He has absorbed all sorts of choreographic influences—including those of Alston, Merce Cunningham, and Pina Bausch—and has devised his own form of imagistic dance-theatre.

Spink is fond of long complex passages of movement. He has compared the steps in his *Canta* (1981) to big wallpaper patterns, and Steve Goff, one of his dancers, says that Spink creates "something of a movement continuum within which the phrasing is always twisting and turning, renewing and discovering itself, and giving an impression of limitless breath."¹⁶ But Spink also likes to disrupt his patterning with quirky dramatic or humorous touches and sudden shifts of tone, and his productions are theatrical collages that often involve elaborate scenic designs, costumes, and props.

During the course of *26 Solos* (1978), three elegantly dressed women kept entering and departing, and their dancing was punctuated by bizarre details: one acquired a moustache, another brushed her teeth, the third put drops in her eyes. Spink is fascinated by the absurdities and irrationality of ordinary life. *Dead Flight* (1980) evoked the claustrophobia and tensions of passengers on an airplane. Episodes in *Further and Further into Night* (1984) were inspired by *Notorious*, Alfred Hitchcock's suspense film about the daughter of a Nazi sympathizer who falls in love with an FBI agent. *Bösendorfer Walzer* (1986) combined references to the plot of Michel Fokine's fairy-tale ballet *The Firebird* with incidents involving such prominent Surrealists or Dadaists as Tristan Tzara, Salvador Dali, Frida Kahlo, and René Magritte. *Weighing the Heart* (1987) was filled with layers of mystical imagery; Spink's sources included the Apocryphal story of Tobias and the Angel, the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, the libretto of Mozart's *Magic Flute*, and the lives of such religious figures as John the Baptist, Mary Magdalen, Mohammed, and Simone Weil.

In contrast to such theatrical extravagance, Rosemary Butcher, who has studied in England and America, has always been something of a minimalist. Butcher, who founded her company in 1975, emphasizes spare arm and upper-body movements and geometrical floor patterns. Yet she has also come to realize that dancers are more than objects in space and that they can suggest relationships as well as create kinetic designs. Thus, her *Touch the Earth* (1987) was not a totally hermetic abstraction, but an evocation of ways in which members of a community claim, measure, and settle on their territory.

Several younger British choreographers have delighted in being anarchical, irreverent, and provocative. Michael Clark, though a disciplined choreographer of technically demanding dances, likes to fill his productions with candid sexual references, cross-dressing, and nudity, and their accompaniment is often ear-splitting rock music. In Lloyd Newson's choreography for a company called DV8, dancers take great physical risks, throwing themselves at one another and against the floor and walls to express shifting emotional relationships that may involve sexual stereotyping, states of loneliness, and the struggles of people to assert themselves or to relate to others. Lea Anderson choreographs for two groups: the all-female Cholmondeleys (pronounced Chumlies) and the all-male Featherstonehaughs (pronounced Fanshaws); the names of both derive from old English family names which are now considered funny because of the