

she had studied at the Hammersmith College of Art and Building, and while enrolled at London Contemporary she continued part-time at the St. Martin's School of Art. As a dancer, she is essentially a product of London Contemporary and remained closely identified with it as a performer and choreographer until the 1980s, when a desire to create more works than London Contemporary's schedule and budget permitted prompted her to work with other groups, including Rambert, Second Stride, and her own Siobhan Davies Dance Company, which she founded in 1988.

Alston cast her in many of his productions and her choreography, like his, has sometimes been called cool and understated. Nevertheless, she has gone her own way. She made her choreographic debut in 1972 with *Relay*, a piece for London Contemporary Dance Theatre that derived from such sports activities as running, hurdling, boxing, and wrestling. Since then, she has choreographed both "pure" dance works and dances that emphasize emotional situations and dramatic developments.

Among her mood pieces are *The Calm* (1974), which contrasts peacefulness and agitation, with peace at last prevailing, and *New Galileo* (1984), in which the stage space is constantly redefined by changing lighting patterns. The austere *Step at a Time* (1976) emphasized the flexibility and ease of the upper body; the movement was so devoid of what the critics Mary Clarke and Clement Crisp referred to as emotional "clutter" that they called the choreography "white."¹³

When she uses dramatic material, Davies does so with restraint, presenting, repeating, and varying key movements, sometimes in a contrapuntal manner that makes her characters seem to be engaged in kinetic conversations.¹⁴ *Something to Tell* (1980), inspired by Davies's reading of Anton Chekhov's stories and plays, expressed the feelings of a lonely woman. *Silent Partners* (1984) was a series of duets showing a man and a woman passing through a series of relationships. What they learned from each was evident in the way that movement ideas from one duet would be brought into the duet that followed it. Whereas some choreographers exploring such a theme would choose an emotionally passionate score as accompaniment, Davies, typically restrained, had all her duets danced in silence except for the last, for which there was music by Orlando Gough.

The School for Lovers Danced (1985) was an adaptation of Mozart's *Costi fan tutte*, to some of the music from that opera. It is Davies's most literal dramatic creation. But in *Wyoming* (1988) she once again

avored emotional implications rather than explicit statements, and the choreography was her response to the vastness of America's Great Plains.

By the mid-1970s, modern dance groups were starting to proliferate in Britain, causing such a major funding body as the Arts Council Dance Theatre Sub-Committee to wonder how—or even whether—it ought to support them. In 1976, the critic Peter Williams voiced his opposition to such funding: "Let us, for the present at any rate, forget about 'experiments' and 'experimental projects' in connection with dance . . . everything has been done before."¹⁵

Such a view, of course, did not please the dancers engaged in such "projects"; more than ever, there appeared to be a wide gap between the dance establishment (into which some of the most iconoclastic dancers would put Rambert and London Contemporary) and a rebellious younger generation. To let the world—and one another—know what they were up to, some of the rebels in 1977 established a magazine, *New Dance*, which, until its demise in 1988, offered its own lively and opinionated comments on the dance scene.

Soon the compositions of some of the younger choreographers began to be referred to as New Dance. The practice thereby gave the dance world yet another term which, like *Ausdrucksanz* or postmodern dance, was significant without also being easily definable. Yet the existence of the term "New Dance" was a sign that British modern dance was not confined to Rambert or London Contemporary, and the fact that its advocates preferred it to postmodern dance, which was associated with the United States, indicated that British dance lovers no longer thought it necessary to look abroad for esthetic inspiration.

The magazine *New Dance* was founded by the X6 Collective (Emilyn Claid, Maedée Duprès, Fergus Early, Jacky Lansley, and Mary Prestidge), a group of dancers of varying backgrounds. Their headquarters was the top floor of an old warehouse in London's Docklands district where, from 1976 to 1980, they offered classes, workshops, and performances by themselves and by choreographers outside the collective. The late 1970s saw growing political disillusionment in Great Britain, and X6 interpreted social issues from a radical viewpoint. Working in harmony as a collective, these dancers sought ways of presenting political ideas in art and of gaining control over their lives and over a society which they considered repressive.