

choreographer of its own: Christopher Bruce, who joined the company in 1963, became one of its principal dancers, and remained with it during its esthetic metamorphosis. In order to emphasize its commitment to contemporary choreography, Ballet Rambert changed its name to Rambert Dance Company in 1987.

The other major contributions to British modern dance in the 1960s were made by Robin Howard, a man blessed with visionary idealism and sound practical sense. The great-grandson of the Canadian railway magnate Lord Strathcona, the grandson of Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, and the son of a member of Parliament, Howard was educated at Cambridge and studied law, although he never practiced. He served as a lieutenant in the Scots Guards during World War II and lost both his legs in battle. After the war he became a successful hotel owner and restaurateur. Yet, though he was a convivial man, he was not content merely to provide people with good food and fine wine. Howard had a mission—and he remained devoted to it until his death in 1989 at the age of sixty-five.

The horrors of war made him responsive to the causes of world peace and social justice. And he discovered dance. Indeed, he once confessed that he was drawn to dance "partly because it was a total contrast to warfare."³ Ballet first attracted him. Yet, although he continued to admire it, he did not find it totally satisfying.

Then came Martha Graham's sparsely attended and financially ill-fated London season of 1954. Looking back on it, Howard wryly commented, "Legend has it that there were only thirty-five people in the stalls on the second night, and I am one of the five thousand people who claim to have been among those thirty-five. I was in fact there." Indeed he was. Graham astonished him and, he said, his reaction was "shock, and then marvel and wonder."⁴

Howard became a lover of modern dance: of Graham's choreography, in particular, but also that of other choreographers. By the 1960s, he was sufficiently devoted to the art as to vow to do something to further it. He sponsored Graham's London engagement in 1963 and provided funds enabling British dancers to study in New York at the Graham School and American modern dancers to teach in England.

In 1966, the same year as the Rambert transformation, Howard established the London School of Contemporary Dance. A year later, the London Contemporary Dance Theatre gave its first performances, and in 1969 Howard supervised the remodeling of an old drill hall

into an arts center containing studios and a theatre which was named the Place. By 1970, Howard's school had 63 full-time students; the enrollment in the mid-1970s rose to about 120.⁵ Jane Dudley was appointed senior teacher in 1969, and Nina Fonaroff, another former Graham dancer, was also on the faculty. Understandably enough, given Howard's background, the London Contemporary school and company were rooted in Graham technique; yet Howard exposed students to a variety of other influences. Those students came from many backgrounds. Some had received ballet training. Others were theatre students or students from art schools, which, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, were centers of cultural ferment in Britain.

Indeed, Geoff Moore, one of Britain's unclassifiable choreographic talents of the day, had no formal training as a dancer and was entirely the product of art schools. In 1968, the Welsh-born Moore founded Moving Being, a multimedia group that specialized in theatrical collages involving movement, films, slides, music, and spoken words. His productions often juxtaposed images. A television set was seen playing inside a huge mouth in *Accumulator* (1969); two men and a woman, all wearing white hospital gowns, slowly changed positions in *Trio* (1969) to the reading of texts about sleep, dreams, and memory; as they moved, the woman sometimes seemed a real person involved in some emotional relationship to the men, whereas at other times she could have been a figment of their imaginations. *Signis* (1971) brought together dancers representing Alice in Wonderland, Hamlet, Ophelia, and the French theatrical theorist Antonin Artaud—all of them people (fictional or real) who experienced identity crises. Moving Being was in residence at the Place, 1969–1972, after which it moved to Cardiff, Wales.

The London Contemporary Dance Theatre's first director and one of its principal choreographers was the former Graham dancer Robert Cohan. As a soldier in England during World War II, the American-born Cohan had attended a Sadler's Wells ballet performance of Robert Helpmann's *Miracle in the Gorbals* and had been deeply affected by this balletic depiction of Christ's return to the Glasgow slums.

Like Howard, Cohan was branded by his wartime experiences, especially by his memories of the way in which Allied soldiers trying to prevent the Germans from reaching Paris would hurry ahead without stopping to take prisoners. Instead, they would promise the Germans safe treatment if they would come out of hiding; when the