

# 4 Dance Magazine

April 1962 75 Cents

Violette Verdy, Gallic Yankee / Inside Juilliard  
Guest Producer at Radio City / Growth of Arts Councils



Violette Verdy

# MYRON IS A SENIOR

*We follow a dance student through his tailor-made program at the Juilliard School of Music*

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**STUDENT FROM BALTIMORE:** Dance major Myron Howard Nadel is graduating from Juilliard in June.



**SOLID STRUCTURE:** The Juilliard School of Music, on Morningside Heights, has included a dance curriculum for 11 years. The school moves to Lincoln Center in (tentatively) 1965.

The Juilliard School of Music offers a unique and complex experience for the dance student.

Almost a hundred pupils are today immersed in the relentless daily routine of Juilliard's dance department — toiling through technique and choreography classes, plus rehearsals, then throwing a raincoat over sweaty leotards to take careful classroom notes in music, notation and dance history, as well as academic courses — all within a completely musical atmosphere.

The purpose of this activity was set down when the dance department was founded eleven years ago in the music school's austere, graystone building atop Morningside Heights: "to train students to become expert dancers, choreographers, teachers, and at the same time, develop in them penetrative musical insights." The idea was proposed and pro-

pelled by Juilliard president William Schuman (now president of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts), who invited Martha Hill, a long-time pioneer in dance education, to set up the new department.

As for placing dance in a rounded college curriculum, the 1951-52 catalogue explained: "The contribution that an artist can make to the world . . . is not only concerned with mastery of his field, but also with his artistic integrity and his understanding of the diverse forces which affect the evaluation and direction of his particular specialty."

A far cry from the image of dance as a purely physical art.

This rich approach to dance training requires a working day that begins at 9 a.m. and often runs to 9 or 10 at night in order to fit in rehearsals for workshops or school performances. Not too many survive. With enrollments having

increased from fifty-four in 1951 to roughly one hundred in recent years, only forty dance students have graduated from Juilliard (fifteen earning diplomas, and twenty-five adding the two academic subjects a semester necessary for a Bachelor of Science degree).

There are many reasons for dropping out — to join a dance company, to start a family, to concentrate on technical training alone, to enjoy a more conventional campus life, or to seek more academic study. Some feel that one or two years of this broad dance education is sufficient. One of the six candidates for graduation this June, a pretty brunette named Virginia Klein, says, "You've got to keep your eye on that degree . . . really concentrate on it . . . because it's easy to lose sight of."

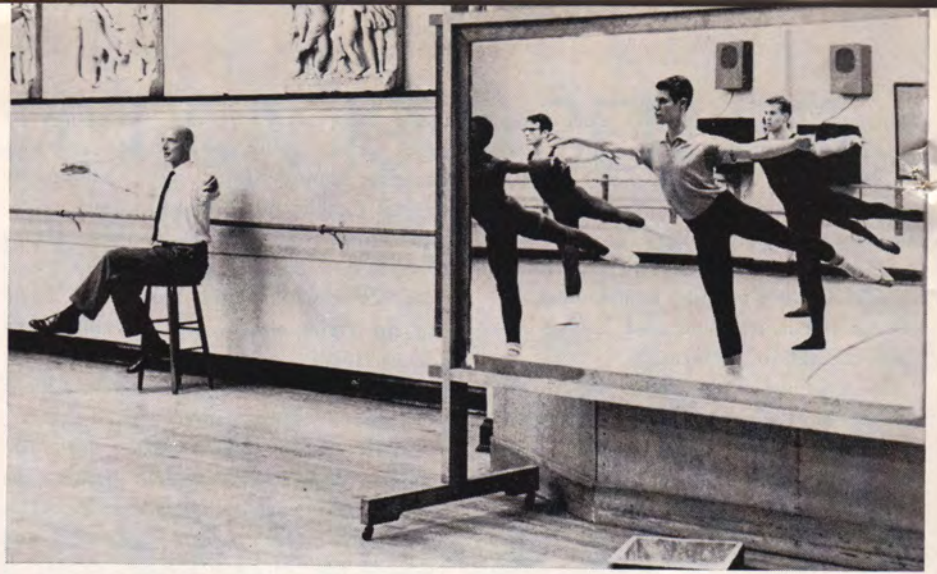
To expect impatient young minds to appreciate one's over-all artistic devel-

**MYRON IS A SENIOR**

**TUDOR CLASS:** Famed choreographer directs Myron Nadel and fellow students in a ballet study.

right center:

**CRASKE CLASS:** An honored British ballet teacher leads her class in center exercises.



**LIMON CLASS:** The brilliant choreographer and dancer inspires the youngsters in a modern dance technique class.



**LABANOTATION:** A student trio follows a dance score through a sequence composed by the late Doris Humphrey.

opment is asking a lot. It's encouraging to see the neophytes as high-spirited and self-disciplined as they are. The Juilliard dance department is a young idea. Miss Hill sees need for changes, possibly when the school moves to larger quarters at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. But these consist mainly of having more opportunities to perform.

One member of the dance department's student body, Myron Nadel, has understood the Juilliard purpose. This tall young man will graduate in June, planning primarily to teach. Already a veteran of summer stock and an industrial show, he hopes to dance when jobs are available, perhaps on Broadway or TV. He dreams of choreographing a Broadway show. Juilliard has prepared him as "a dance pro," as Miss Hill puts it. The director, her assistant June Dunbar, and the dance faculty have tailor-made a curriculum for Myron — as they do for each student — based on his background, interests and talents. Myron is completing his studies in three and a half years. Others have done it in less time, fulfilling qualitative rather than quantitative requirements for graduation.

Myron, who last fall became the first winner of the Doris Humphrey Scholarship, came to Juilliard with scattered dance experience in his native Baltimore, mainly in tap dancing. For admission he passed an audition (some barre exercises and center combinations) and observations by the school's anatomy professor, Dr. Lulu E. Sweigard.

In a school where ballet and modern dance are equally respected, Myron was placed as a freshman in a beginners' modern class, and, because of previous training, in an intermediate ballet section. All students must meet second-level proficiency in ballet and modern before being allowed to major in either, and most continue to take both.

He has majored in Limón technique, studying with José Limón himself, Betty Jones, and the wonderful Miss Dunbar, who seems to find a creative challenge in the young bodies laboring in her class. If he had chosen to major in Graham technique, he might have trained under the Virginia-accented commands of Helen McGehee, whose presence fills even a dance studio with theatrical excitement. The Graham students are taught also by artists Ethel Winter, Mary Hinkson and Bertram Ross. Technique classes average fifteen students in size.

The ballet majors might graduate with a slight British accent. Their teachers in-

clude England's Antony Tudor, Margaret Craske, and, from Sadler's Wells, Fiorella Manuel and Henry Danton, as well as Uruguay's Alfredo Corvino.

Required for all is the four-year Dance Composition course. The freshman starts with Composition and Materials, learning the rudiments of choreography from Lucas Hoving, and proceeds in the next three years according to the directions indicated by Louis Horst.

In Mr. Horst's classes, after initial instruction by Janet Mansfield Soares, the student deals first with Pre-Classic Forms — shaping contemporary movement and mood in the spirit of a *gigue*, *pavane* or *allemande*; then Modern Forms, recreating imagery inspired by primitive or modern art works; and finally Group Forms, orchestrating movement for a small ensemble. The purpose is not only to train choreographers, but to produce a creative dancer who will be more valuable to a choreographer.

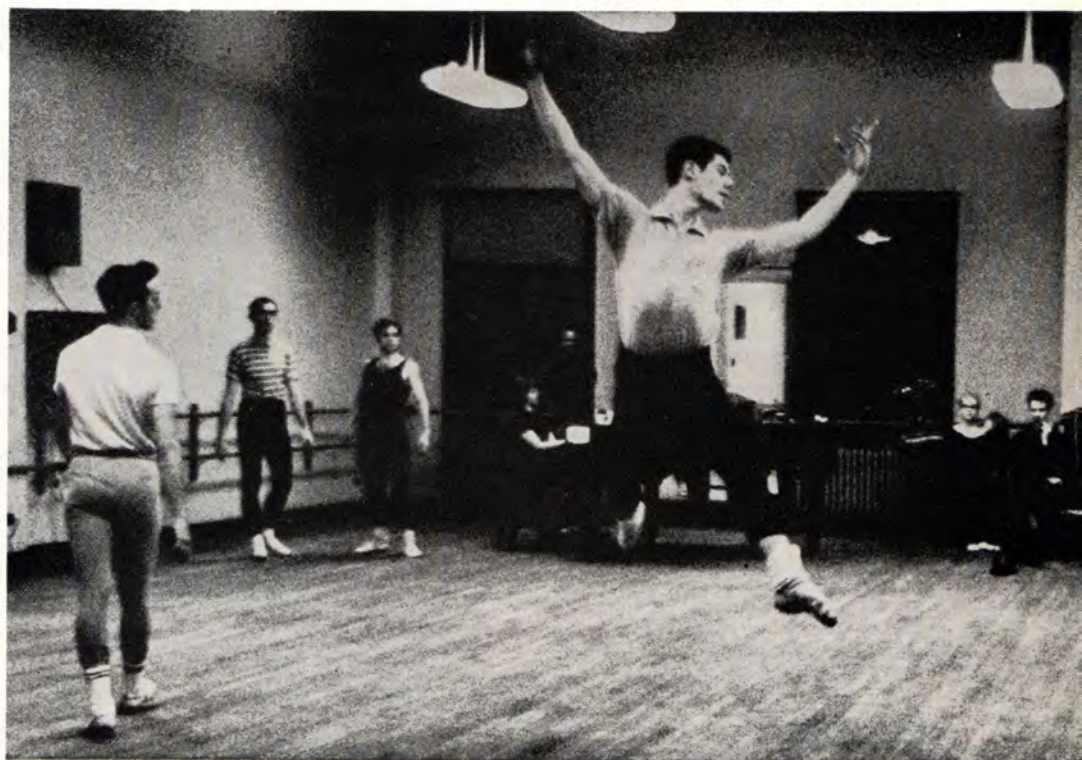
Two years of Labanotation are taught, and Myron notated the Rose Adagio. He danced in this divertissement among *The Sleeping Beauty* excerpts put on by Juilliard students with the Philadelphia Orchestra last season. A year of Stagecraft and two years of Dance History and Criticism, Miss Hill's own course, are requirements. A growing dance library and

(Over)



**STUDENT'S GUIDE:** Martha Hill, highly respected name in dance education, is initiator and director of the dance department, which gives equal weight to ballet and modern dance.

**STUDENT AT WORK:** Myron, who plans a career as teacher and choreographer, is one of 10 boys in Juilliard's dance division.





**TEACHER AT WORK:** Assistant administrator June Dunbar shows Myron how to enrich a dance phrase in modern technique class.

**MUSIC:** Literature and Materials of Music is a required course for dance students. Myron fingers chords at the keyboard in a rhythm class, as Norman Lloyd instructs.



the frequent showing of dance films supplement the classwork.

The strictly musical portion of the curriculum is the invention of William Schuman, composer of some vital dance scores. All Juilliard students, in music or dance, must take four years of a course he prepared and initiated called Literature and Materials of Music, in which they learn theory, structure and music history.

Dance students gain awareness of their special relation to music. For an opera class, Myron staged an excerpt from *The Magic Flute*, while others dramatized scenes from *The Coronation of Poppea* and *The Beggar's Opera*, and the students could understand the basics of molding music-related, expressive movement in a stage picture. Their teacher was Norman Lloyd, who has also composed important dance scores.

L & M students can ultimately read a score, and play the piano a little. As Myron explains, "You learn to know where you are with the music."

There is constant interplay between the dance and music departments. Last season Myron choreographed a jazz duet to a percussion accompaniment arranged by Saul Goodman, the New York Philharmonic tympanist who also teaches at Juilliard. Myron was staging numbers for a student performance this spring of a new musical, scored by a Juilliard composition major.

Wednesday's anatomy class is an elective, recommended especially for potential teachers such as Myron. Dr. Sweigard's aim is always towards efficiency of movement, minimum effort, to eliminate the body tensions and cramped muscles which plague dancers.

In her "posture labs," students are taught how to change the entire body toward better alignment, increased flexibility and greater ease. With her guidance, the dancer acquires knowledge of human anatomy and the principles of muscle function, and solves physical problems by use of "imagined movement." The aim is to correct basic neuro-muscular patterns of coordination. The students frequently receive instruction while lying on their backs, knees bent, on tables. Imagined movement, as well as slow movement of small range dominated by thinking, are basic in Dr. Sweigard's laboratory work. Myron says that after a laboratory class he feels as though he has taken a restful nap.

Betty Jones, lovely star of the Limón company, works as Dr. Sweigard's assist-



**ANATOMY:** Dr. Lulu Sweigard educates the neophyte dancers in the principles of muscle function — to ease movement and reduce strains.



**DANCE COMPOSITION:** Louis Horst and assistant Janet Mansfield Soares teach the basics of choreography — pre-classic and modern forms, for soloists and small ensembles. Above, they watch a workshop study created by Myron.

**PAS DE DEUX:** In ballet repertory class, Myron and pretty classmate Linda Shoop learn a duet from Swan Lake.



#### MYRON IS A SENIOR

ant and carefully applies the professor's principles in both teaching and dancing.

Miss Jones has helped Myron's preparation as a teacher. She has watched him instruct a Sunday dance class for singers, actors and musicians at Dance Players Studio, and later offered helpful suggestions. Myron has also taught dance to handicapped children in a project sponsored by the New York Philanthropic League. He wrote a term paper at Juilliard on this experience. At school, he is permitted to fill in for faculty members, often taking over ballet and modern classes. He has studied teaching techniques in the preparatory division, where a hundred youngsters take Saturday classes with Pearl Lang, Patricia Birch and Corvino. In his academic studies, Myron takes particular interest in psychology, which he believes will help his teaching.

Myron has found his studies at Juilliard very profitable. Endowed with clear-headed intelligence and great interest in what goes on around him, he is a quite different fellow from the 19-year-old Baltimore tap dancer of three years ago. True, he feels the demands on him have been great, but so much the better says he. So are the demands of life.

**Opposite:**  
**CHOREOGRAPHER AT WORK:** Myron watches a rehearsal of his own composition — acutely aware of form and movement because of his Juilliard experience.

**STAGECRAFT:** Myron is introduced to the backstage lighting apparatus by Thomas de Gaetani, stagecraft instructor who does lighting for many professional dance concerts.



