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Maurice Béjart 1997

This Twentieth Century, now nearing the fulfilment of its destiny, has truly confirmed what I proclaimed in the fifties and which was greeted then with somewhat derisive - smiles – that this was the century of Dance.

A hundred years ago a madwoman of genius appeared, almost naked beneath her veils, free and sublime: Isadora Duncan surged up to overturn all the traditions and received ideas on the art of ballet.

On another front, the Russian Ballets of Serge Diaghilev were making their own revolution into which the greatest geniuses of the epoch – musicians, painters, dancers and choreographers poured their creative energies. Ever since Dance, “The Sleeping Beauty” at last awakened it has not ceased to conquer new audiences and new countries all over the world.

The different choreographic tendencies encounter one another; styles develop, mingle, confront each other or give rise to hybrid forms. One can say that this century has seen the life and work of as many choreographers as there were opera musicians in the nineteenth century.

Young and vibrant audiences have taken over from the former “balletomanes”, and are there to support new ventures, suddenly putting dance in relation and in competition with the two “greats” of this epoch – Sports and the Cinema!

Dance is a sport, but also more than a sport since it unites the joy of effort and sporting competition with an emotional and spiritual life. Dance, like the cinema offers us pictures – rapid, emotionally moving, plastic, abstract or dynamic images to put rhythm into our ego.

This century is going to die, Long live Dance, Dancers and all those who see their being through their bodies.