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*Joyous Dancing Interprets Life*



By Mona Robertson  
 "The posture is the self-portrait of a person." Willy Blok Hanson, Canada's foremost teacher of interpretive dancing told "The Liberal" in an interview this week at her lovely ranch-style home at Lake Wilcox.  
 We chatted in the living room overlooking a "natural" lake which Hurricane Hazel whipped up in her frenzied passage through the district three years ago. The lake is fed by eight springs, which H.H. ripped open to fill a wooded valley behind the sloping lawns at the rear of the house.  
 Mrs. Hanson strikes a glowing portrait herself, with her vivid personality, warm, laughing brown eyes and softly waved dark hair, as she moves gracefully about the spacious room, bare-footed, her expressive hands emphasizing the vivacious expressions which flit across her face as she speaks of "the dance."  
 Willy Blok Hanson was born in Java in 1917, educated in The Hague, Vienna, Paris and London; acquired her dance training and technique in Vienna, until "The Germans moved in 1938 and the dancing school moved to Paris," but Willy Blok took off for Paris too, and graduated at the age of 22.  
 Now slim and supple as a young racehorse (as Willy Blok Hanson puts it), she recalled that, "before I began dancing lessons I was a fat girl and miserable." But since her glorious rejuvenation Willy has danced and studied in most of the fam-

ous capitals of Europe and the East Indies. Her repertoire for concert performances includes dances from Java, Sumatra, Bali and North India, performed in traditional style with authentic costumes and headresses. At one time a puppi and dancer with the famous Ram Goal Dance Company she brought her great wealth of experience to Canada from Singapore, just six years ago.  
 Since then she has appeared on stage and television as well as before prom audiences not as "directed" but as she herself "interprets" the dance. "My dancers and I," Mrs. Hanson has a Toronto group of 200 pupils, "have only to know the choreography required, we interpret the idea to the audience through our dancing," she explained. "I teach the fundamentals of dancing, through a scientific knowledge of the anatomy" the dancer-teacher continued.  
 It was this knowledge that probably saved Willy Blok's life during the war years, for between 1939 and her marriage to an Australian, Linden Hanson, in 1945, Willy saw life in its most tragic and cruel stages. During those years she spent days, weeks and months at various times, in and out of Japanese political prison jails. Sometimes it was for having such a thing as a radio, so trivial she says now. But she once served a 55 day sentence, during which she almost starved, "it was their way of making us 'confess' so we could be brain-washed".  
 During the first eight days of this sentence Willy was given no food, "just a drink of water in the evening". After that, until she was released, she received a dish of rice once a day. But here is the amazing part of this story, which goes deeper than words can convey—when Willy Blok finally appeared before the Japanese interrogator at the end of her prison term (imposed because she was suspected of hiding an Australian officer from the Japanese, which of course was true, but which she must be strong enough to resist "confessing") she walked out of her cell with clear eyes, head erect and that same graceful spring to her step she has today.  
 "This is because I continued to do my rhythmic exercises daily in my bare cell", Willy explained. Others who came out of prison at the same time were crippled wrecks, their minds and bodies dulled and sickened with privation and their own hopelessness. "Appearance can make or break your life", Willy Blok Hanson believes. "Beauty is not a thing you can buy—or put on—but beauty is something you have to work for. The body which is making all its muscles and its complete circulation work to its fullest capacity, is a well body. And a well body creates a well mind."  
 Answering a question as to the age group who may benefit from Mrs. Hanson's natural method of graceful living—which incidentally dates back to the ancient Greek Civilization, and which was compiled by 24 professors of medical science in Vienna, we were told her pupils range be-

tween 2 years and 72 years!  
 According to Mrs. Hanson, interpretive dancing is not just for children who will some day appear on stage or television, but it is a relaxing release from modern day tensions for the child and the adult.  
 Of teenagers and "problem" children Mrs. Hanson says: "Aesthetic experience and expression promotes the conscious development of morale, for a mind trained to appreciate and understand what is good and beautiful will not easily fall prey to nervousness, self-indulgence and moral weaknesses."

And to illustrate the success of interpretive training, Mrs. Hanson has a living and beautiful example in her own daughter, Christilot, aged 11.

"Christilot is just an average child", Willy Blok Hanson affirms, "but through her dancing training she has learned to become alert and to develop her own mind through her own efforts." Among Christilot's many accomplishments to date, she has appeared on the concert stage with her mother since the age of three years; she is now in grade seven at the Royal Conservatory of Music, and commences grade 8 studies at Branksome Hall this fall, where she attends school.

Self-expression, when guided into the right channels, will not only create poise of body and of mind, but can train the will to select and live right also. With her parents' permission Christilot has already started a stable of her own by purchasing two jumpers with her own earnings over the past two years—and she has won prizes in riding and jumping at various horse shows, competing and winning over riders with 10 or 12 years experience.

This September, children, business girls and housewives of Richmond Hill will have the opportunity of learning the art of interpretive dancing for themselves. Willy Blok Hanson is opening a Richmond Hill Studio at 6A Levendale Road. This town is most fortunate in the latest addition to its cultural and physical welfare, since Mrs. Hanson's group of dancers is the only one in Canada which the musical division of the Department of Education has sent on tour—to interpret dancing in its educational phase.

As a gesture of goodwill to the Town of Richmond Hill, Mrs. Hanson plans a Christmas Recital in the Lions Hall. All proceeds will be for Lions' Welfare work.

We feel that Willy Blok Hanson's greatest asset in teaching may be summed up in her own words, "I never say, 'don't' to my pupils—instead I say, 'do'. Telling a student 'don't do this and don't do that' can only confuse her and she will be so busy wondering what she did wrong she cannot follow the right way. Praise and a personal interest in each pupil does more to promote success, than any form of goading or criticism," she declares.

NEWMARKET: Three members of council were absent from the last meeting, Mayor Belugin left the hospital Monday after several weeks treatment following severe burns suffered in his plant on Davis Drive. Councillor Kent is in the hospital with his second heart attack this year. Reeve Jack Luck is on a trip to the west coast.

**Annual Pioneer Festival To Be Sat., Sept. 27**

The second annual Pioneer Festival is to be held Saturday, Sept. 27, on the grounds of the Dalziel Conservation Area (located on Jane Street at Steele's Ave.) in suburban North York Township, it was announced by the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

The festival will re-enact pioneer farm life as it was during the early 19th century. Last year's festival attracted 2,000 visitors, who also paid a visit to the Pioneer Museum located in the area.

In a report by the MTRCA's historical sites advisory board regarding the Pioneer Village at Edgeley, it was pointed out that there now are six buildings restored.

These include a smokehouse; three dwellings; a barn and a pigery. One of the houses is a two-storey log dwelling with red pine panelling and a huge fireplace, which was built in 1826.

By the time the village is completed, it will comprise about 20 buildings, including a church, manse, homes, general store, post office, apothecary, blacksmith shop, woodworking shop and school.

The pioneer development is expected to be opened to the public next summer. All of the buildings in the village will pre-date 1867.

The advisory board also reports that it is seeking a suitable

site in Brampton for marking the old Haggert's Bros. Agricultural Works, one of the first farm implement manufacturers in Upper Canada. The factory was built in the 1840's. Dedication of the site will take place next month.

STOUFFVILLE: A local rink won the Provincial Ladies Lawn Bowling Triples Championship. The winners, Mrs. Dorothy Wagg, Mrs. Reta Lushway, and Mrs. Eleanor Crossen. Two are repeat-ers. Mrs. Crossen has now won the singles, doubles and triples championship. Mrs. Lushway is a doubles and triples champion.



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**Notice To Creditors AND OTHERS**

IN THE ESTATE OF MATTIE ELIZA HARRISON

All persons having claims against the Estate of MATTIE ELIZA HARRISON, late of the Town of Richmond Hill, in the County of York, deceased, who died on or about the 6th day of April, 1958, are hereby notified to send in to the undersigned on or before the 25th day of November 1958, full particulars of their claims.

Immediately after the said last mentioned date, the assets of the said estate will be distributed amongst the parties entitled thereto, having regard only to claims of which the undersigned shall then have notice.

Dated at Richmond Hill, Ontario, this 28th day of August, 1958.

Russell Lynett and John Reid McAlister, Executors,

By their solicitor, JOSEPH RABINOWITZ, 65 Yonge Street South Richmond Hill, Ontario

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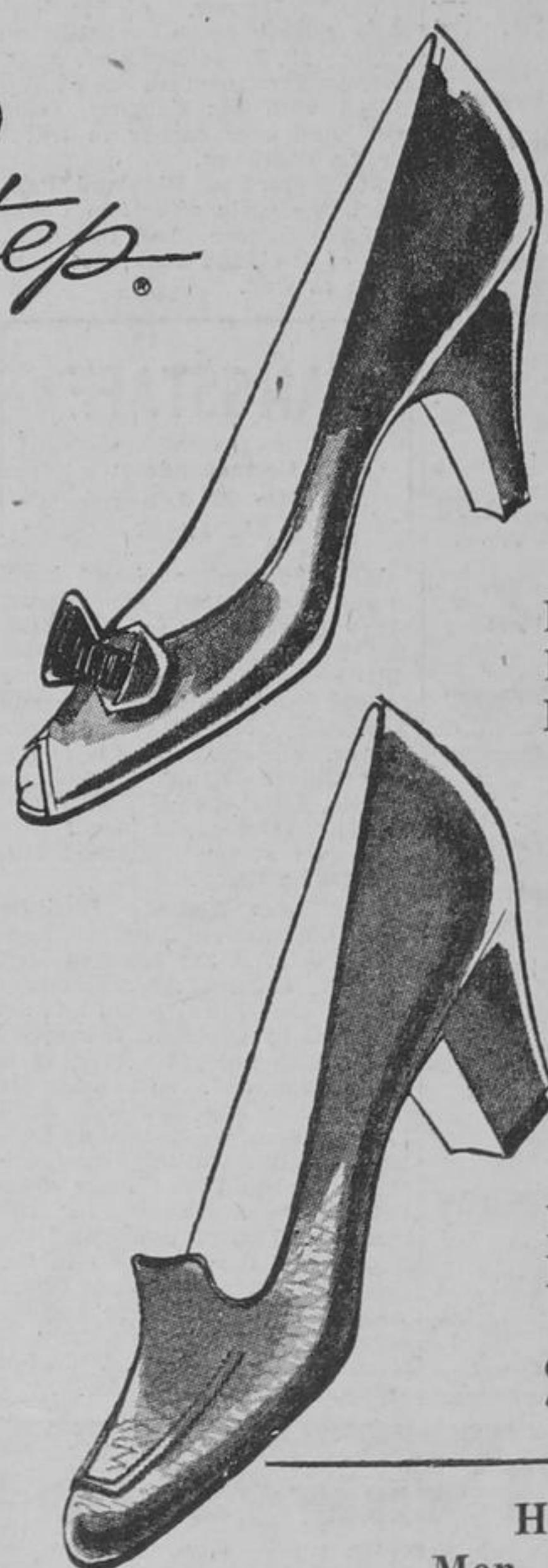
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