

The Complete Guide to Modern Dance

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PAT CATTERSON

One of the most advantageous things about having dancing parents is that one absorbs the ambiance of performing without any conscious effort. Catterson's parents were a ballroom dancing team and opened a studio in Indianapolis, where she took her first lessons in acrobatic and tap dance and formed a miniature team with her brother. She continued class all the time that she was going through high school and then decided that she wanted to be a clinical psychologist. She enrolled at Northwestern University, which also had a strong theater department, and continued to take class at Gus Giordano's studio in Chicago. She graduated with her degree in psychology but had received a scholarship to study at Connecticut College's Summer School of the Dance as well. She took composition class with Bessie Schönberg and started to design her own pieces, and in 1968 she showed her work at Clark Center for the Performing Arts in New York. A serious knee injury kept her inactive for over a year, and she created a full-evening program in 1970 at Judson Church, which launched her independent career. She has appeared with James Cunningham and Yvonne Rainer and gives lessons in tap at her own studio and Dance Theater Workshop.

BLEECKER TO WEST 80TH AND EPILOGUE

Choreography by Pat Catterson. Music by Fernando (Subway Composition) and Syntonic Research, Inc. (Environments). First performed at the Judson Dance Theater, New York, N.Y., December 9, 1970, by Pat Catterson, Larry Comer, Billy Siegenfeld, Ruth Barnes, Lee Harper, and Clarice Marshall.

A bad knee injury forced Catterson to restrict her performing for a year prior to the concert in which she presented this piece. During that time she worked with dance therapist Frances Cott, masseur Ben Benjamin, and physician Jack Davis, all of whom received program credit with thanks for their help. While she was strengthening herself she had a great deal of time to think about her work, and the concert made for an impressive debut.

A woman does a solo to the sounds of a subway journey and is joined by a man and another woman. One woman twitches her shoulders and the other strides around. The three are spread around the outside of the area. Suddenly they all bend forward and rush to the center and are joined by another man and woman who join them in a crouch. They form a tight, compact mass. The dance movement goes and stops, as does the accompanying

sound track. There are the stations where people board and exit, and there is the actual traveling which takes place between the stations. During the traveling sections the dancers move in groups, and at the stations individuals perform solos. There are repeated falls and the dancers rise to fall again. The movement has a crabbed and tight look, suggesting an urban lack of space. The group tumbles and shoves; these are the subway games that people play. Each person tries to retain some individuality in the midst of the restless, surging mass. To conclude, they all step over a fallen member of the group and dash to the outer edges of the performing space. They run back to the center, tumbling the last few feet like an implosive concentration of particles.

In the epilogue all have left, and a solo woman turns and tumbles in patterns that suggests the spiral swirl of a snail's shell. It is a beautiful sequence and is accompanied by the sweet sound of waves crashing and birds twittering.

Catterson's rough and tumble energy was sensitively modulated in the final solo, which was offered as a contrast to the violent thrashing of the previous section. It was a pastorella as opposed to an urban stress situation. Movement and music underlined the differences strongly.

CHOREOCHRONICLE OF PAT CATTERSON

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| 1968 | <i>Yvonne Rainer's Trio A</i>
<i>Backwards</i>
<i>Like as Not</i> (with Douglas Dunn)
<i>I Will I Williwilliwilli</i>
<i>Post Roof Piece</i> |
| | $(5 + 1) = (1 + 5)$
<i>Tubes</i> |
| 1969 | <i>Ground Row</i> |
| 1970 | <i>Shoes and Hair in White II</i>
<i>Does Anybody Else Remember</i>
<i>the Banana Man?</i>
<i>The Relay</i>
<i>Purple</i> (with film by Abe Likwornik)
<i>Biographies</i> |
| | <i>This Door Swings Both Ways</i>
<i>*Bleecker to West 80th and</i>
<i>Epilogue</i>
<i>Warm-Up for Judson Church</i> |
| 1971 | <i>Roof Piece</i> |
| 1973 | <i>Previews and Flashbacks</i> (with film overview by Abe Likwornik)
<i>Someone Old New Borrowed</i>
<i>Blue</i> |
| 1975 | <i>Yes No Noisy Show</i>
<i>Serial I</i>
<i>Serial II</i> |