|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **About you** | **[Salutation]** | Melissa | [Middle name] | Templeton |
| [Enter your biography] | | | |
| [Enter the institution with which you are affiliated] | | | |

|  |
| --- |
| **Your article** |
| Montreal Modern Dance Company (1952-1955) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| The Montreal Modern Dance Company (1952-1955) was an important though short-lived collaborative project between Lithuanian émigrés and dancers Yoné Kvietys (1924-2011) and Birouté Nagys (1920—). Though unacquainted prior to their arrival in Canada, they both studied movement in Lithuania with Danuté Nasvytis, a dancer who trained at the Mary Wigman school in Germany. They met while dancing in Montreal with the Wigman-influenced choreographer Ruth Sorel. The Montreal Modern Dance Company gave its first evening-length performance in early January 1954, and that same year the company performed at the sixth annual Canadian Ballet Festival. Both performances were well received. The company disbanded in 1955 when Kvietys moved to Toronto. Kvietys and Nagys would collaborate again several years later at the 1963 Canadian Modern Dance Festival when Kvietys invited Nagys act as guest choreographer for her Toronto-based group, The Contemporary Dance Company. |
| The Montreal Modern Dance Company (1952-1955) was an important though short-lived collaborative project between Lithuanian émigrés and dancers Yoné Kvietys (1924-2011) and Birouté Nagys (1920—). Though unacquainted prior to their arrival in Canada, they both studied movement in Lithuania with Danuté Nasvytis, a dancer who trained at the Mary Wigman school in Germany. They met while dancing in Montreal with the Wigman-influenced choreographer Ruth Sorel. The Montreal Modern Dance Company gave its first evening-length performance in early January 1954, and that same year the company performed at the sixth annual Canadian Ballet Festival. Both performances were well received. The company disbanded in 1955 when Kvietys moved to Toronto. Kvietys and Nagys would collaborate again several years later at the 1963 Canadian Modern Dance Festival when Kvietys invited Nagys act as guest choreographer for her Toronto-based group, The Contemporary Dance Company.  Kvietys left for Germany following the Soviet occupation of Lithuania. There, in Hamburg, she attended the Laban Concert and Theatre Dance School before moving to Toronto in 1948. Nagys left Lithuania in 1941 to pursue her dance training in Vienna, Austria, where she studied with Rosalia Chladek, another Wigman-trained dancer. When Soviet representatives came looking for Nagys in Vienna, she fled, eventually moving to Montreal in 1948.  Kvietys and Nagys met while working in Montreal with dancer and choreographer Ruth Sorel (1907-1974). Kvietys and Nagys soon began to choreograph together and, under the artistic direction of Kvietys, the two founded the Montreal Modern Dance Company in 1952. Of the fourteen new works Montreal Modern Dance Company mounted, *The Return* (1954) is perhaps their best known. With music by Russian composer Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) and story by Kvietys, *The Return* tells the tale of a happy couple tormented when ‘The Man’ becomes consumed by thoughts of his previous wife. Nagys and Kvietys co-choreographed the work and performed in it as ‘The Woman’ and ‘The Returning One’ respectively, while former Ballets Jooss dancer Alexander MacDougall, who had also worked with Sorel, performed the role of ‘The Man.’ Another work of note in this programme was *The Cycle*, later renamed *Manière de Commencement* (*Manner of Beginning* [1954]). Set to the music of French composer Eric Satie (1866-1925), the piece depicts the ‘the eternal cycle of life and death.’ After watching a performance of *Manière de Commencement* at thesixth annual Canadian Ballet Festival in Toronto, Herbert Whittaker of *The Globe and Mail* praised the work for its ‘excellent use of the piano score by Satie and fine sense of movement in space […] dignity and form.’  As dance artists, Kvietys and Nagys were interested in improvisation. Believing modern dance to be a more expressive and creative medium than ballet, Kvietys believed that modern dance allowed the body to move more organically, and thus highlighted the personalities of the individual dancers performing it. Montreal Modern Dance Company was one of the first highly skilled groups dance groups in Montreal to dedicate itself to the production of modern dance works.  The company disbanded in 1955 just before Kvietys moved to Toronto, where she founded The Contemporary Dance Company, while Nagys remained in Montreal where she continued to teach and perform. The two would collaborate again several years later at the 1963 Canadian Modern Dance Festival when Kvietys invited Nagys as a guest choreographer to create the work *Evolutions* (1963) for Kvietys’ Toronto company.  [Image: Dance.jpg]  Figure Alexander MacDougall, Yoné Kvietys, and Birouté Nagys (prostrate) in “Dark Vision” (1954). Wachnianyn Photography, courtesy of Alexander MacDougall. In Max Wyman’s *Dance Canada: An Illustrated History*. List of Works: *March* (Kvietys, 1954)  Sarabande (Kvietys and Nagys, 1954)  *Three Etudes* (Nagys, 1954)  *I met Them in a Dream* (Kvietys and Nagys, 1954)  *Turn Dance* (Kvietys, 1954)  *Nordic Dance* (Kvietys and Nagys, 1954)  *Slavonic Dance* (Kvietys, 1954)  *Elegi* (Kvietys and Nagys, 1954)  *Dance in Red* (Kvietys and Nagys, 1954)  *Dark Vision* (Kvietys and Nagys, 1954)  *The Return* ( Kvietys and Nagys, 1954)  *Cycle* or *Manière de Commencement* (*Manner of Beginning*). (Kvietys and Nagys 1954)  Sarabande and Toccata (Kvietys and Nagys, 1955)  *Visions de l’Amen* (*Visions of Amen*). (Kvietys and Nagys, 1955)  *Brazilian Dance* (Kvietys 1955)  *…And time is the Master* (Nagys, 1955) |
| Further reading:  (Doolittle)  (Doolittle and Flynn, Dancing in a Canadian Wasteland: A Postcolonial Reading of Regionalism in the 1960s and 1970s)  (Lindgren)  (Tembeck)  (Tembeck, Birouté Nagys)  (Wyman) |