

# Music for a solo dancer

Acclaimed dancer fuses live piano and modern dance to create artistic harmony

**Roseann Langlois**  
Entertainment Editor

Toronto's brilliant solo dancer, Peggy Baker, will bring her "Music for Piano and Solo Dancer" tour to Laxson Auditorium Feb. 7 at 7:30 p.m.

Since her 1990 solo debut, Baker has attracted international attention. One of Canada's foremost dance artists, she synthesizes dance with live music and newly commissioned scores. Her works embody startling power, sculptural elegance and arresting grace.

Baker is only five feet, seven inches, but her presence on stage makes her seem larger than life. She calls movement "an elemental and exuberant mode of expression."

"For me, dancing is a first language," Baker said. "I understand it and it makes perfect sense to me and it is so deeply satisfying. I feel most in my element when dancing."

Integral to her solo performance is a live music factor. Baker has been touring with a pianist since her solo career began. Currently she is touring with critically acclaimed pianist Andrew Burashko.

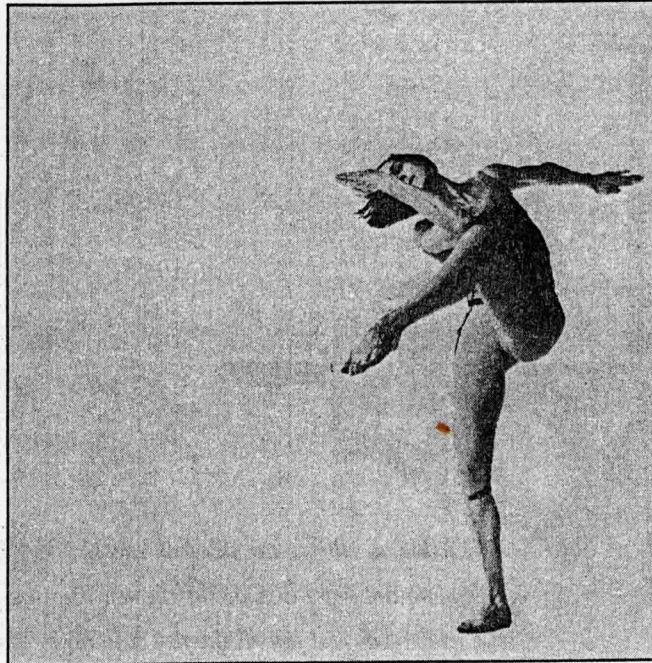
"She expresses in movement exactly what I try to express with music," Burashko said. "When I see how she interprets the music, it gives me a clearer vision of what I'm trying to do with the piano."

Baker speaks eloquently about the feeling of the piano's vibrations, about the spontaneity of the movements that "bounce off" the music and are "of the moment."

Having a pianist on stage has a powerful affect on the audience, Baker said.

"I think the physicality of a good musician is just supremely beautiful, and it lends to the authenticity that I aspire to in my own performance."

In addition to her outstanding career as a dancer and choreographer, Baker is also a highly sought after teacher. She presently is the first



ever Artist-in-Residence at the National Ballet School.

Baker said she was "smitten" when she first saw modern dance. She was 19 and a student of dramatic arts at the University of Alberta in Edmonton when she met Patricia Beatty, co-founder of the Toronto Dance Theatre.

In 1971 she moved to Toronto to pursue her dream of being a dancer and went on to New York in 1981. From 1981 through 1988, Baker toured internationally as a featured member of the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, assisting Lubovitch as a rehearsal director during her last two seasons.

In the fall of 1990, Baker toured the United States with Mikhail Baryshnikov in his White Oak Dance Project featuring the choreography

of Mark Morris.

Baker and Burashko are continuing a collaboration begun in 1991 with their full scale dual recitals. "Music for Piano and Solo Dancer" displays the rhythm, breadth and balance of a traditional piano recital further enhanced by the beauty and dynamism of dance. Movement, light and color bring new dimension to powerful compositions by Brahms, Chopin, Prokofiev and others.

Tickets for Peggy Baker and Andrew Burashko's "Music for a Solo Dancer" are \$10 for children under 12 and Chico State students, \$12 for senior citizens, high school and Butte College students and \$15 for general reserved. Advanced ticket outlets are at the University Box Office, Sunrise Crafts, Art etc., Diamond W Western Wear, Terrace Pharmacy, The Sandwich Co. and the House of Color in Paradise. For disability-related accommodations, call 898-4325.

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