

Composing Music For The Ballet

Young Marinite Finds A Special Satisfaction

By DON KEOWN

Paul F. Page, who never in his life has seen a live performance of ballet, has, nevertheless, written music and stories for three of them.

And next weekend, two of his ballets, "The Adventures of Christopher" and "Odds 'n' Ends," will be performed in Angelico Hall on the Dominican College campus, San Rafael, by the Joan Edgerton Gabert School of Classic Ballet.

The 22-year-old Page, a Marinite 12 years and the son of Mr. and Mrs. Al Rose of 563 Loganberry Drive, San Rafael, plans to be on hand for the occasions.

"OF COURSE," says Page, "I've watched ballet on television. But I've never seen a performance in a hall or theater."

If young Page is a neophyte to ballet, he is nevertheless an experienced hand at composing. He began writing music — church music — while in college.

Born in San Francisco, Page attended a private high school in Mountain View and then went on to St. Patrick's College in that same city.

IN HIGH school, he says, he had staged a few piano recitals and took part in "the usual" school musicals.

It was, he says, the changes in the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church in America, from the Latin to the vernacular, that first inspired him to compose.

"I could see," he says, "that there was an urgent need for new music to go along with the liturgical changes."

BUT WHAT made him think that he could write music?

"I really didn't know if I could or not," he admits. "But I thought: 'Why not give it a try? And I went to work.'"

Paul Page says it was one of the most exciting moments of his young life when he first heard music he had written being performed — at services in the St. Patrick's College chapel. "I was shaking like a leaf."

FROM RELIGIOUS to secular composition was a small and natural step, and Page directed and arranged the music for two

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CHECKING THE SCORE for the ballet, "The Adventures of Christopher," which they created jointly, are Marinites Paul F. Page, who wrote the story and the music, and Joan Edgerton Gabert, who did the choreography.

Their work will be performed by the Joan Edgerton Gabert School of Classic Ballet next Friday and Saturday in Dominican College's Angelico Hall as a benefit for scholarships for artistically-inclined young Marinites. (Independent-Journal photos by Jim Kean)



NEVER HAVING SEEN a live performance of the ballet, although he has written three of them, Paul F. Page is learning about the art form by attending rehearsals of his "The Adventures of Christopher" by the Joan Edgerton Gabert School of

Classic Ballet. On stage are, left to right, Lori Gabert, Melanie Radke, Linda Reimann (kneeling), Polly Steinmetz, Margaret Shields, instructor-choreographer Joan Edgerton Gabert and Robin Rimes.

There's A Story Behind A New Ballet

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St. Patrick's College musicals.

He is not quite sure how he came to writing music for ballet in view of his total lack of acquaintance with that art form.

"I guess," he says, "that this story idea just popped into my mind first. And I thought: 'What

a charming ballet that would make.' And then I began writing the music to tell that story."

IT WAS THIS first story idea that was to develop into the 35-minute ballet, "The Adventures of Christopher," in which a small boy leaves home to explore the forest and finds a

magical land of candy children with whom he romps before finally returning to the warmth and security of his own house.

"It is the kind of fantasy," says Page, "which I think will appeal to both children and adults."

Since "The Adventures of Christopher," Page has added two shorter ballets, "Odds 'n' Ends," which he describes as 15 minutes of dance variations displaying five different concepts or styles, and the impressionistic "Birth of Spring," a 25-minute work scheduled for its first performance in the spring of 1970.

WRITING MUSIC for ballet differs largely from composing

Its Composer Has Yet To View A Performance

for musical plays in the emotional elements involved, Page says. "The musical is more detached. Writing for the ballet is very much like painting a picture."

He begins with his story idea, as he did with "The Adventures of Christopher," and from that the musical ideas flow.

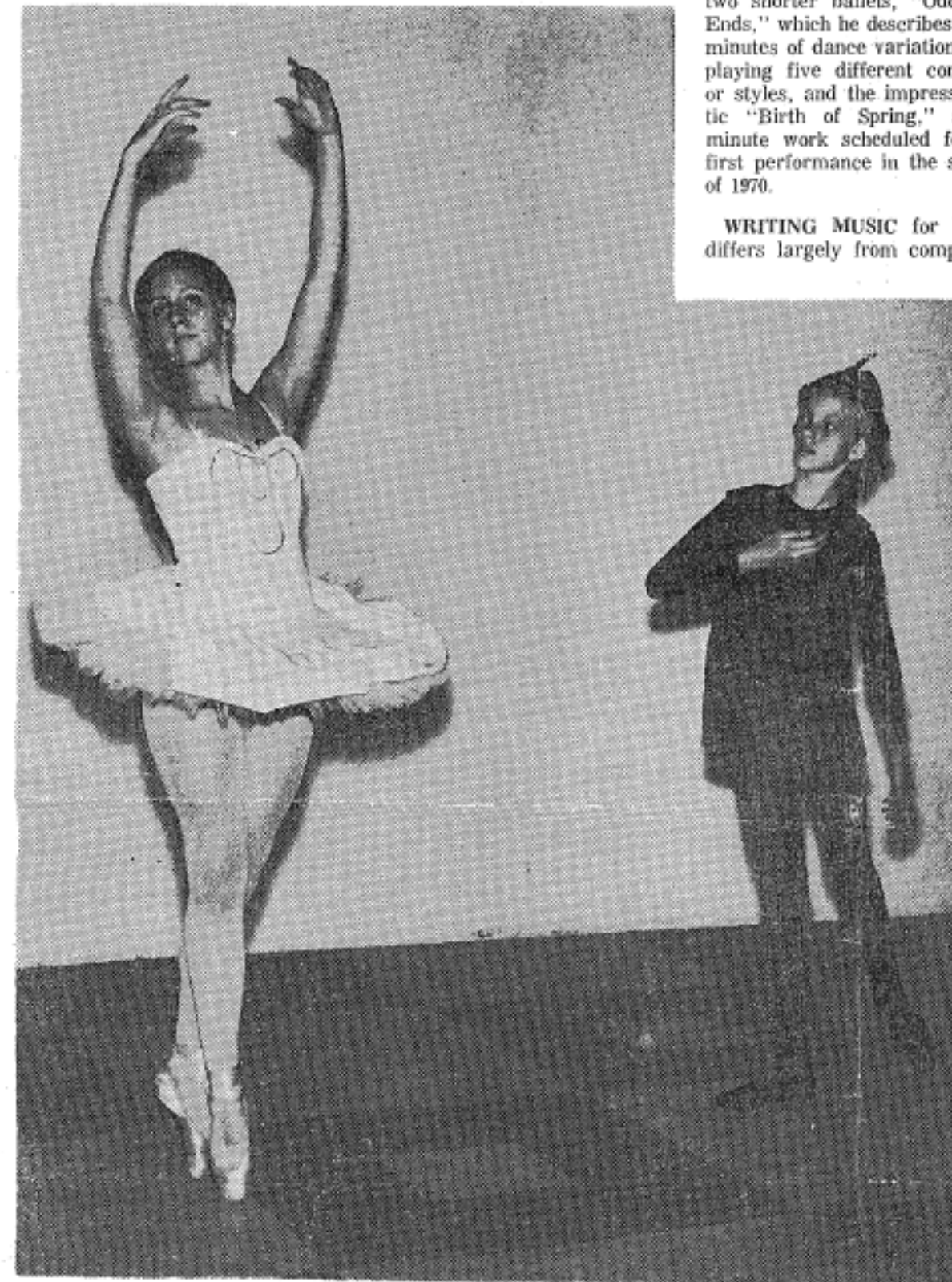
"And as I wrote," he says, "I could imagine the movements of the dancers, as I had seen them on television, even if I didn't know the technical terms for them."

ONE RESULT of his limited knowledge of the more technical aspects of ballet, according to Page, is that the movements for his works, while basically classical, grant the dancers a somewhat greater range of freedom.

The stories and music written for his first ballets, Page began looking for a choreographer.

He found one in Joan Edgerton Gabert, San Francisco Ballet-trained professional with a successful career in dancing and 20 years experience teach-

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THE TITLE ROLE of Christopher will be danced by Melanie Radke, right, when the Joan Edgerton Gabert School of Classic Ballet performs Paul F. Page's "The Adventures of Christopher" next Friday and Saturday at Dominican College, while Lori Gabert, left, will appear as the Magic Princess. Page, 22,

of San Rafael, who wrote both the story and the music, says the fantasy ballet should appeal to both adults and children. It is one of three ballets he has completed, although he is yet to see his first live performance of a ballet. Needless to say, he will be on hand next weekend.

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