

SUBMISSION BY NICHOLAS DROMGOOLE

I write as the former dance critic, for over thirty-four years, of the Sunday Telegraph. I have also served on the Drama Advisory Committee of the British Council, the Performing Arts panel of the Council for National Academic Awards, and was for many years Chairman of the Institute of Choreology, training choreologists for professional dance.

I am appalled at the suggestion that unlike all the other major countries of Europe, Scotland should no longer have a classical ballet company and that its current board have decided not to renew the contract of its artistic director, Robert North who is so greatly respected in the international dance world. There is one very simple test to establish the status of a choreographer. How many dance companies throughout the world wish to include one or more of his works in their repertory? North passes this test with flying colours. At my last count over forty dance companies, in both Europe and America, include in their repertory, ballets he has created. He also has a distinguished record as a company director, from his successful direction of Ballet Rambert onwards. His latest full length work, "Carmen", which I saw in a crowded and enthusiastic Glasgow theatre, and which was warmly received on the company's recent tour in Portugal, seemed to me nothing short of brilliant - theatrical, musical, and exhilaratingly creative as dance drama.

I have to question the integrity of the board of Scottish Ballet which has in effect decided to cut the company's artistic throat. What on earth do the Chairman and board members think they are up to? Their job was to support the very fine dance company they administer. Did they take their seats on the board with some secret agenda in mind, or are they quite simply so lacking in expertise about dance that they do not realise what harm, what sheer artistic vandalism they are in the process of committing?

I understand Robert North has the unanimous support of his dancers, and of the orchestra ? Hopefully, public outrage can yet stop this wilful self destruction before a board which is so out of touch with artistic standards and the wishes of the audience the company serves so well, is allowed to destroy one of Scotland's much admired cultural assets.

What is needed is some form of public enquiry to establish the facts, the behaviour and motives of those responsible.

Yours faithfully

Nicholas Dromgoole.