

## The Urban Strategist / Melinda Blau

# HOW TO GET OUT OF YOUR JOB RUT

"...People who switch jobs may be wiser than those who stay put. Research shows they tend to be happier in life's last half..."

As one of the thousands of New Yorkers who have resolved to change their working lives, I found myself comparison-shopping in the hope that one of the 38 vocational-guidance services in the Yellow Pages could show me what career I ought to shift into and how to start it with a new job. Job-hunting classifieds in the *Times* are up 30 percent this year, and the economic upturn encourages more and more to try for a change. We've all become consumers of change, testing everything other generations have held sacred. And now there's the new puritan ethic called Meaningful Work. By the time the annual job-jumping season peaks later this month, hundreds will be sweating through psychological tests, slipping out of their offices for interviews with other organizations, or sleeplessly tossing in bed, wondering what to try next.

Studies in California show that five out of six men going into their thirties experience some form of mid-career crisis, and the American Management Associations found five years ago that nearly half of a group of 2,700 successful executives were unhappy in their job.

The people who switch rather than sulk may be wiser than the ones who stay put. Research shows they tend to be happier in life's last half. And a Michigan State psychologist has found that the more often a manager changes jobs—even sideways—the higher he's apt to rise.

But where do you start? I had been an editor for an educational publisher, but by the early seventies, with one child and few free-lance assignments to do at home, I felt stultified.

I wanted a career, not just a series of unrelated paycheck jobs. So I went on the job prowl, doing everything from P.R. work to designing menus. But once the novelty wore off, the scattered activity drove me back to educational writing—and to career counselors. My vocational odyssey took me through weeks of alternating hope and rage, at considerable cost. Perhaps I can spare you some confusion and disappointment. The charts on these pages sum-

## Career Counselors at a Glance

Name, Address	Testing	Evaluation and/or Counseling	Staff	Physical Setting	Fees	Comments
<i>Behavior Therapy Center of New York, Professional Corporation</i> 111 East 85th St. (722-2300)	1-3 hours of testing—interests, personality, perceptual, intelligence, aptitude.	45-minute interpretation of tests; additional counseling and testing at \$30-\$50 an hour.	Certified psychologists specializing in behavior therapy.	Private offices in East Side apartment building.	Initial interview, \$35; * testing and evaluation, \$50-\$75.	The vibes were not particularly comforting, nor did the therapist seem to be in touch with the realities of the working world.
<i>Columbia University Psychological Consultation Center</i> Horace Mann Building (Room 332) Broadway at 120th St. (678-3262)	The center does not recommend tests for all people, but provides interest, aptitude, and achievement tests as needed.	Emphasis on counseling, not testing; number of sessions unlimited.	Graduate students in counseling psychology; counseling is part of practicum taking place under supervision of Teachers College psychology professors.	Small, stark, claustrophobic counseling rooms.	Initial session, free; \$1-\$15 per session for testing and counseling (sliding scale based on current income and dependents).	A good testing facility for students and women reentering the job market. Age and experience of staff probably limit center's effectiveness in certain career-counseling cases.
<i>Dynamic Careers</i> 60 East 42nd St. (490-2190)	4-5 hours of interest, personality, aptitude testing, scored by outside testing service.	Counselors promise to interpret results and make suggestions for career changes based on testing.	Career counselors have varied business experience, but one was unavailable for several weeks.	Small, disorganized office.	Initial interview, free; testing and evaluation, approximately \$300.	D.C. hard-sells "accurate" and "individualized" tests, a "fool-proof" program—more than the best of agencies can deliver.
<i>Federation Employment and Guidance Service</i> 215 Park Ave. South near 18th St. (777-4900)	3-8 hours of interest, aptitude, intelligence, and personality tests as needed.	Counselor places some meaning on test results but draws most information from individual conferences; counseling takes into account the realities of the job market.	Certified psychologists and vocational counselors with minimum of M.A. degree.	Dreary offices.	Maximum fee, \$100 (sliding scale based on ability to pay); counseling without testing is available.	Counselor was supportive and realistic. Free employment service also available. Facility seems more suited to people with limited work experience.
<i>Bernard Haldane</i> 598 Madison Ave. at 57th St. (421-2590)	Very little testing; emphasis is on an analysis of past achievements and rewarding experiences; person develops a "work sheet" to illuminate skill strengths.	Intensive analysis of "marketable skills," preparation of résumé, role playing, mock interviews; client is then sent on "reaction" calls, aided by additional counseling and follow-up work.	Career consultants with varied backgrounds, all trained and certified in the Haldane method.	Beige carpets, oak-paneled walls—a very "executive" atmosphere.	First and second introductory meetings, free; total service averages \$1,500-\$2,000, based on the level of "responsibility" a client can achieve and the extent of counseling needed to get there.	A reputable, well-established firm particularly suited to executives or other high-income people. Several Haldane books available for those who'd rather do it themselves—or who can't afford the fees.
<i>Johnson O'Connor</i> 11 East 62nd St. (838-0550)	4 half days devoted to approximately 20 different "work samples" that measure physical and mental aptitudes plus vocabulary test.	Constant feedback during testing; at final 1-2-hour evaluation, client is given "inventory of aptitudes and knowledge" (and tape of evaluation session, if requested). Counselor suggests ways aptitudes can be applied at work and in spare time.	Varied backgrounds related to education and/or counseling; all trained in venerable Johnson O'Connor methods.	Elegant East Side townhouse—paneled walls, marble floors and columns, dark woods.	No initial interview; all testing and evaluation, \$240.	A unique testing facility that does not rely on "paper-and-pencil" tests. The emphasis is on natural aptitudes, not acquired knowledge (except vocabulary). Does not counsel on specific jobs, but gives a good picture of one's strengths.
<i>Mainstream</i> 274 Madison Ave. between 39th and 40th sts. (889-7964)	Testing—personality and interests—1½-2 hours; client listens to some taped information sessions, but spends most of the time analyzing skills and functions, with and without counselor.	After initial testing, client is given evaluation; counselors then help pinpoint specific areas of vocational satisfaction and define an "ideal" job situation; third phase is "professional job campaign."	Company started by clergyman interested in helping others adjust to secular jobs; members of staff now have varied business and religious backgrounds and "have made at least one career change."	Small, understated waiting room and outer offices; tests given at table in waiting room, or in a back office. (As of May 1, will be located at 21 East 40th St.)	Initial testing, \$75; fee for complete service begins at \$1,000, based on current income and client's anticipated job marketability.	An eclectic approach with little emphasis on testing; service can benefit those who need ongoing guidance and support in higher-level job search.

\* In most cases, fee for initial interview is applied to total bill.



Name, address	Testing	Evaluation and/or Counseling	Staff	Physical Setting	Fees	Comments
<b>The Personnel Labs</b> 211 East 43rd St. (292-5098) 733 Summer St., Stamford, Conn. (203 325-4348)	Grueling tests for interests, intellect, and temperament given over 1-2-day period, depending on client's schedule and testing stamina.	Evaluation conference 10 days to 2 weeks after testing gives staff's interpretation of results with "tentative" job-field suggestions.	Most are certified psychologists or "psychologically trained."	Small offices and waiting rooms; tests are given at 2 large tables in testing office.	Initial interview, \$40; complete testing service and evaluation, \$300.	A reputable psychological-testing facility, but setting and staff are geared to industrial selection, not individual counseling.
<b>Personnel Sciences</b> 52 Vanderbilt Ave. between 44th and 45th sts. (684-5300)	18-21 hours of aptitude, interest, ability, and personality testing to develop an individual psychological profile.	2-2½-hour "interpretation meeting" to give results and to explore various career directions.	Certified counseling; clinical, school, and industrial psychologists.	Cold and clinical atmosphere—a "testing factory."	Initial interview, \$35; complete testing service, \$200; additional counseling at \$35 an hour; \$25 additional if Saturday testing is required.	The setting and staff seem geared to industrial selection rather than individual career counseling. The emphasis is on testing; additional counseling means additional fees.
<b>Stevens Institute of Technology, Laboratory of Psychological Studies</b> Hoboken, N.J. (RE 2-8237)	Does not advise testing (interests, aptitude, personality) for everyone, as "most tests are designed for high school and college students"; counseling time depends on individual needs.	Test results are viewed as one piece of information that can "help the individual make decisions"; counseling helps client further pinpoint needs; extensive career library.	Minimum standard is M.A. in psychology with counseling experience.	Modern university building; institutional feeling; separate testing room.	First appointment, \$30; complete service and use of resources, \$225 for adults. \$125-\$185 for high school and college students.	A good testing, counseling, and resource facility. Recommended especially for students and women reentering the job market.
<b>Vocational Guidance Bureau</b> 155 West 68th St. (787-0171)	12-14 hours of testing, including intelligence, projective personality, aptitude, and interest tests.	If evaluation of tests indicates that "the person is not using his/her intelligence potential, then the answer is with the personality"; ongoing therapy is then recommended, at \$25-\$45 a session.	Licensed psychotherapist in private practice with background in law and business.	Comfortable private apartment/office.	Initial consultation, \$30; testing and evaluation, \$200; other fee arrangements available.	A psychotherapist practicing vocational guidance is still a psychotherapist. It all depends on what you're looking for.
<b>YMCA Counseling and Testing Service</b> 420 Ninth Ave. near 33rd St. (244-8661)	General mental-ability, interest, aptitude, and personality tests given in up to 8 hours of testing; testing not suggested for everyone.	3 hour-long evaluation sessions follow tests.	Vocational counselors and psychologists.	Ground-floor offices—cold, institutional feeling.	Initial interview, \$25; complete service, based on income. \$95-\$250 (average: \$150); alternate counseling arrangements also available.	A good testing and counseling service, especially for people with limited experience. Counselors may be out of touch with some aspects of the labor market but can offer helpful strategies.
<b>Andrew Alaways</b> 164-30 Hillside Ave., Jamaica, N.Y. (657-9573)	Handwriting analysis.	Written evaluation and verbal feedback.	Self-taught graphologist; background in fire-fighting and typesetting.	Testing done by mail and/or telephone.	\$10.	Results were amazingly similar to those of the supposedly more "scientific" methods—and a lot cheaper.

marize the services various New York agencies offer and what they charge. Since prices and services vary wildly, you need to know what to expect before you call for an appointment.

Costs run all the way from \$10 to \$5,000, and techniques range from handwriting analysis to pep talks to three-day sieges of tests. (One graphologist, using a sample of my tidy scrawl, came up with a personality profile quite similar to the one I got from the more "scientific" test-givers.) Some agencies take your money and hope you fade away; others promise to stick with you for ten-year "maintenance." Their offices may be mangy walk-ups or elegant paneled suites; the range in competence is even greater.

Before your initial interview, be aware that nobody can wave a magic wand that will turn you into your future self. You have to do the hard work

yourself. So why waste the money and time to hire a guide? Well, you don't have to. The box on page 86 offers tips on how to be your own counselor and lists the better do-it-yourself books. However, tests can start the self-discovery trip, and a good counselor can help you get on with the search. You're investing in yourself, and it just might pay off.

During my complimentary visit at **Dynamic Careers**, the woman who "interviewed" me said, "We don't look at things in a personal way. We can be very *subjective*," and explained that a career counselor is "a person who counsels you on your career." But a D.C. career counselor was "out sick" during the several weeks I kept calling him. "Perhaps someone else could help you," I was told. The someone else turned out to be an ex-client who raved about the testing program: "They

canned my whole psychological profile in three paragraphs." The "individually designed tests" were a battery of standard aptitude and interest tests, but you can get additional aptitude measurements of, say, literary or sales skill. Presto! Instant vocational growth, all for the tidy fee of \$300.

For total contrast, there's the **Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation**, in a stately townhouse. The company has been in the business since the 1920s and has offices in a dozen cities. It did no history-taking on the phone, offered no initial interview. Take it or leave it, I could pay \$240 for a full set of aptitude tests. I signed up because of stories I'd heard about people who'd gone there. One, a friend of a friend, bored with her position in a bank, had taken its tests and been told to try something she'd never thought of—landscape architecture. Two years and several courses later, *Glamour* magazine is calling her an "up and coming" landscaper.

For me, however, the elegant atmosphere seemed at first too stuffy to inspire any new awareness. The woman who led me up the marble staircase spoke in hushed tones and sat me down to take the first tests under her personal supervision. It was quite unnerving. For several other tests, I was shown into the "music room," where headsets and a screen took the place of the examiner. During four half days, I took tests on design memory—in which I was supposed to re-create complicated patterns that had flashed on a screen for a split second—creative imagination, and inductive reasoning. The English vocabulary test is Johnson O'Connor's only check of achievement rather than aptitude. Your vocabulary, it seems, is a sensitive predictor of how far you'll drift up almost any ladder of success.

By the end I was wondering whether it was all a waste of money. There was too much talk about "work samples" (tests) and "human engineering," as if people can be measured like lumber and talents tested for tensile strength under pressure.

I had hoped Johnson O'Connor would help me find a fresh world to take on. Maybe my "natural, inherent" talents would turn out to be something exotic, like anthropology or landscape architecture. But Johnson O'Connor's evaluation revealed that I'd been on the right career track all along. After a brief high over not having wasted all those years, I felt cheated. It was like being sent back to Go, and the space was crowded. All the men and women around me had now been bitten by the same bug of discontent.



It's one thing to think of yourself as an editor or writer, quite another to have an authority tell you it's your natural role. Feeling that I must now shoot for higher stakes, I persuaded an editor at *New York* to assign me to a story—about vocational shrinks. It was a double-edged sword: I could wrestle with my own career dilemma while venturing into a new direction, as a magazine writer.

Over the next few weeks, I wrote my name, educational background, work history, etc., so many times I could do it in my sleep. In most instances I presented my "case" without explaining that I was doing a story, but even so, I felt a shift in the balance of power. I was now the judge, rather than the one being judged.

At the **Behavior Therapy Center**, I was surprised to find a simple, one-sheet form that asked nothing about my education or work history. Several items asked about previous psychotherapy, and I soon learned why. Psychologists and near-psychologists abound in the vocational trade. Some worry more about your hang-ups than your unused talents. At BTC, a Ph.D. licensed psychologist and behavioral therapist and his staff have merely branched into career advice. The therapist's program was less than convincing. He made it seem as if a couple of hours of testing and a 45-minute counseling session would instantly cure my job schizophrenia. By then I knew that anyone who made career change sound easy had missed the point, so I didn't sample his wares.

At the **Vocational Guidance Bureau**, a lone psychotherapist charges \$200 to test and talk careers, and then she may offer to treat you for any emotional troubles that the tests turn up. Since the tests are mainly projective tools, such as inkblots, the interpretation is highly subjective. When performance in a job falls below personal potential, she argued, one might suspect a personality flaw. I decided that I still needed job guidance, not a personal shrink.

The **Personnel Labs**, known as TPL, is one of the giant agencies that are geared mainly to "industrial selection," a euphemism for personnel screening. These companies specialize in helping big corporations decide whom to hire or promote. Several Supreme Court decisions and equal-employment rules have raised legal doubts about such screening tests—unless they clearly relate to specific skills needed for the job—but hundreds of ambitious executives still submit to this ritual. Individual counseling is also given at TPL—\$300 for the full battery of tests.

The atmosphere at TPL is cool and

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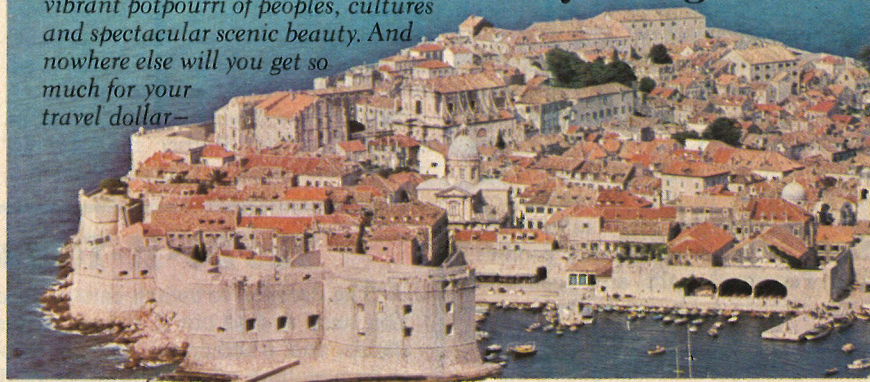
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clinical. The executives, mostly men, who were there because a job depended on their performance were geared up for a grueling day's work on test batteries that are definitely more exhausting and less interesting than the ones I had taken at Johnson O'Connor.

For instance, the Otis Employment Test, while technically not an intelligence test, is a mind-bending, 30-minute multiple-choice exam that took me back to college-entrance tests. Then there were the personality probes with their infuriating "forced choices"—no right or wrong answers. Who is to say whether "all people are basically evil"? Then the scorer purports to rank your various temperaments—"trusting" or "suspicious," "self-assured" or "apprehensive"—on scales of one through ten. Even if you try to play the game honestly, the high-pressure atmosphere is bound to distort personality profiles.

The Personnel Labs also measured my personality with projective instruments, tricky devices based on the assumption that we impose our personality on the things we see. I was asked to tell a story about a picture, to complete unfinished sentences, and to draw childish pictures of a man, a woman, and a house. It's easy to feel that somebody is chasing your id.

But two weeks later I was in for a happy surprise: TPL's three-page report on me turned out to be quite perceptive. The house I drew told TPL I wanted to be a romantic adventurer and a good wife-mother as well as a competent careerist. The counselors knew by then that I was doing an article, and I wondered what the report would have said had it been a secret document for a prospective boss.

Several counselors—at the **YMCA, Federation Employment and Guidance, and the Columbia University Psychological Consultation Center**—told me that I already knew where my strengths lay; no point in testing. Instead, they coached me on job-hunting strategies and cheered me on against the demon of discouragement. The counselors at these lower-priced centers are honest and realistic about what they can and cannot do for people's careers. Nevertheless, their system is more suitable for people who have never thought about their work patterns—college students, women reentering the job market, and others with limited experience.

The director at the **Stevens Institute of Technology** also told me that testing would probably not shed any new light on my vocational prospects, but research would. He invited me to use his career library, which has catalogued hundreds of occupations and indexed stacks of concrete information about

the jobs in each field—salaries, educational requirements, work environments. Being there made me acutely aware of how much I could have been doing for myself all along. Once you zero in on a specific field, Stevens will counsel you on how to get where you want to go.

Some counseling services seemed at first to offer to take me farther and do more for me. In fact, one even promised to work with me "until you're behind your next desk." This general "school" of vocational guidance was pioneered in the early forties by Bernard Haldane. Several centers around the country now bear his name, and many others use his techniques.

The **Bernard Haldane** orientation is nonpsychological. Rather than try to "cure" weaknesses, it stresses talents

and strengths. At Haldane's office here, the sell is very smooth. On two separate visits to this oak-paneled establishment, I spoke at length with a distinguished gentleman who meets potential clients on free introductory visits. Once a contract is signed, the counseling staff takes over.

What Haldaners call "the process" starts with a "work sheet" that can take many hours to fill out. In a key exercise, you list your most significant and pleasurable achievements—what you have really enjoyed doing, perhaps a sideline or hobby. A counselor then helps you to see these activities in terms of job functions and skills. What you like to do, you do well, it seems, and vice versa. One strong no-no: Don't talk in

## The Do-It-Yourself Career Switch

The decision to switch careers forces you to ask yourself some questions. You need to find out if you work better, or worse, under pressure, for instance, and whether you take in information best by reading, by listening, or by watching others. Questions of this sort go beyond work-style into life-style because what you do for a living has a lot to do with how you live. To decide what you want out of your working life, career guru Richard Bolles urges you to consider:

1. Where you want to live.
2. The kinds of people you want to work with.
3. The kinds of activities you like.
4. The working and living conditions that matter to you.
5. Your ideal job specifications.
6. The business ethics you care about.
7. The values you hold important and beyond compromise.
8. Your major interests.
9. The kinds of issues you want to help solve, or the other ends to which you want to spend your creativity.
10. The care of your family and what that requires.
11. Your future life-style, and your loved ones' place in it.
12. Your immediate and long-range money needs and wants.
13. How you want to develop your skills and knowledge.
14. What alternatives you want to have always at hand.

Bolles and John C. Crystal have set up a system for working through such basic questions in a 253-page workbook, *Where Do I Go From Here With My Life?* (Seabury Press, \$7.95). You get more out of the workbook's exercises if you also read Bolles's companion book, *What Color Is Your Parachute?* (Ten-Speed Press, 1976 revised edition, \$4.95). Subtitled "A Practical Manual for Job Hunters and Career Changers," it describes the idiotic flaws in today's job-placement system, or nonsystem, and tells you how to overcome them. If the full treatment looks too terrifying, you can try the abbreviated Bolles process with his 24-page pamphlet, "The Quick Job-Hunting Map" (Ten-Speed Press, 1975, \$1.25).

You can pick up other career-planning books from any good library—the New York Public Library has a special section on careers—but watch out for the cookbook types that only dish up the same old answers: Read the want ads. . . . Write a strong résumé. . . . Hang in there.

Today even in Washington there's a rising awareness of the resentment many feel at being forced into beaten paths from education through work to retirement. Later this month (April 21 and 22), the world's top worriers on this subject, from radical Ivan Illich to Studs (*Working*) Terkel and Jimmy Carter, will try to come up with new policy approaches to aid job mobility.

Maybe one day millions more of us will be like career sage Peter F. Drucker, an ex-banker, philosophy teacher, and management theorist who at 64 still says, "I'm not sure what I want to be when I grow up." —M.B.



terms of job titles; that habit makes you think about status pigeonholes rather than honest personal interest. While some interest and personality tests may be given at the outset, these are only a small part of the process.

The bill averages \$1,500 to \$2,000—for weeks or months of coaching on résumé-writing, interview techniques, etc., while you find a job that fits you.

At **Mainstream**, the counselors are similarly committed to the agonizing process of career-decision-making. They combine limited testing with Haldane-type exercises, in a less pretentious atmosphere but at prices that also climb upward from \$1,000. The initial tests cost \$75 but the counselors warn you not to take the feedback as gospel: "It's no more than 2 to 5 percent of the total process." If you go on to the next stage, you get down to serious work on specific routes to try. The first goal: to write your ideal job description—the tasks, setting, salary, types of co-workers, and other factors that would bring you the greatest career fulfillment.

Both Haldane and Mainstream then push you into the next phase with "reaction" or "advice" calls. Armed with the tools of the job hunt—an understanding of your talents and intents, competence in interviewing situations, and a well-written résumé—you now call on people at high management levels in various industries and professions. You don't ask for a job; you ask about the nature of the work and the needs of their trade. "People love to talk about their field, and they're flattered that you've come to ask their help," says a Mainstream executive.

At the least, the advice calls set up new contacts, provide more information, and hone one's interviewing skills. The hidden agenda, of course, is the hope that the flattered adviser will find or create a job for you. This strategy often works, in part because people at the top personally experience both job-hunting and career discontent more than do workers down the line. I had always thought of career change as perhaps a mark of failure or instability, at least as a dangerous transition through which I'd need professional help. But now I began to see that the people who get the most out of work are the ones who are always ready to move on.

Career counselors let you down only if you expect too much, and they may give you some new ideas, or that edge of confidence you lacked. In the search for meaningful work, as in the search for meaningful relationships, no one can do the job for you or tell you where you're going—not even a job shrink.

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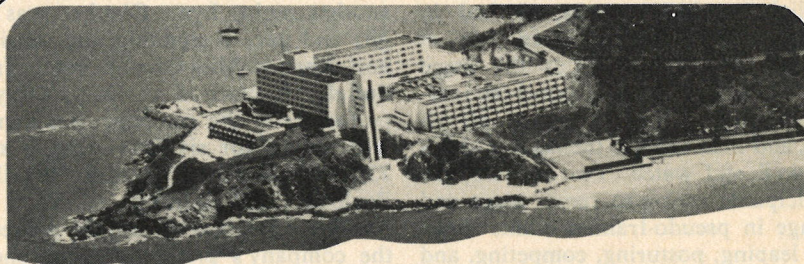


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## Dance & Music

# INNOVATIONS AND OVATIONS

“... The Béjart, with a slew of New York premieres, was received with cheers and standing ovations, at least by the audiences ...”

Maurice Béjart and his **Ballet of the 20th Century** performed these last two weeks in New York in a much better climate than before. In recent years they have been jumped on and dumped on to the extent that the company has often bypassed us on its North American tours. This time, with a slew of New York premieres, mostly of Béjart choreography, the company was received with cheers, flowers, and standing ovations, at least by the audiences.

The season's opener was Béjart's *Golestan*, a piece ordinarily in four parts which consume an entire evening, but this time represented by a section called *The Rose Garden*. A traveler arrives on the darkened stage, footsore and dressed in tatters. He stumbles about and, after agonizing difficulties, falls to the floor exhausted. Suddenly the music bursts into traditional Iranian rhythm, the stage is drenched in golden light, and 32 youths, clothed in white cotton raiment, enter, one at a time, and spiral about the stage *Bayadère*-style. They surround the traveler, engulfing him in waves of action, and then arrange themselves about the wall and watch. Two by two, the participants spring to center stage and engage in pseudo-Iranian ethnic dancing, leaping, posturing, competing, and filling the vast space with potent energy. Soon all 32 are dancing, shrieking (this is a very vocal ballet company), standing aside to watch the traveler, now invigorated and springing higher than any of them. The music changes, the corps disappears, the stage darkens, and the traveler is alone and desolate again, but with a rose in his hand to remind him of his hour of glory.

Also on the first night was *Le Marteau Sans Maître* (*Hammer Without a Master*), a work vaguely Oriental in concept, for six male soloists and a girl, performed to music by Pierre Boulez. Rita Poelvoorde, an enchanting, slight figure in yellow, at each entrance floated onto the stage borne by Bunraku-type figures draped in black and supposedly invisible. The men danced slow balletic measures—singly, by twos, and then by threes—beautifully and with enormous control. At the end,



mating rites were observed, as in *Bugaku* and *Les Noces*, but here with the entwined couple tightly swathed in a yellow silk cloth center stage while the chorus, draped in yellow sarongs, reposed on the floor and meditated. On another night, Lynn Glauber was the girl and gave a stunning and sensitive performance. Miss Glauber comes from Buffalo, is married to Daryl Gray, a performer in the company, has danced with Béjart for six years (she is now 23), and is called by him “the little Pavlova,” and rightfully so. With the possible exception of Angèle Albrecht, the company's prima ballerina, she is the most talented and striking female member of the company.

Never very strong on the distaff side, the company imported three of the world's female superstars to enhance its image. Luciana Savignano, from the La Scala Opera Ballet, arrived to star in *Ce Que L'Amour Me Dit* (*What Love Tells Me*), and was startling in her flexibility and formidable technique. Clad in silver tights, shiny black hair framing her Aztec face, on pointe for nearly the entire ballet, she played a mysterious figure, guiding the (sexual?) destiny of Jorge Donn, Béjart's star male dancer. She stalked him through the intricate mazes, standing on one toe, then bending, with the other foot pointing straight up at the sky, sinewy and snakelike—always in control of her difficult role. Maya Plietskaya, from the Bolshoi, gave a beautiful interpretation of the *Isadora*

*Duncan* technique, using her famous arms to full advantage and taking her bows and flowers in Bolshoi-Duncan style to an adoring audience. Suzanne Farrell, darling of the New York City Ballet, starred in *Bolero. Notre Faust*, which Béjart himself starred in, was the last premiere. More about that and *Bolero* later. —Ruth Gilbert

George Crumb writes some of the most elegant music of our time. His fund of imagination seems boundless; this is not, however, tantamount to saying that his musical designs reveal themselves easily. Crumb's style must be pieced together in the mind of the hearer. Much of his music exists virtually on the brink of silence. I suspect, in fact, that he regards silent space much as a painter regards a canvas: a void onto which lines and colors are to be imposed by the artist, but connected by the observer. At the **Composers' Showcase** concert honoring Crumb with performances of four of his scores, that void consisted of the whoosh from the Whitney Museum's air-conditioning apparatus (the night being warm), so that even more effort than usual was needed to connect the dots and dabs of Crumb's language. The effort was worth the while.

For all its subtlety and difficulty of access, Crumb's music has become popular. This stems most of all, I think, from the ability of his work to suggest infinite imagery. I think, for example, of another composer once popular, Morton Feldman, who, like Crumb, wrote nearly inaudible, fragmented chamber pieces, but where the music almost always came out gray. Crumb's is iridescent, wonderfully well made, and, in the full meaning of the word, fantastic. It leaves you with an interesting question: Is what I am hearing coming from the stage or from inside my head?

The best of the four works on the Whitney program was *Night of the Four Moons*, from 1969, a setting of four García Lorca fragments for mezzo with chamber ensemble, including banjo and percussion. The Spanish poet has served Crumb well in several