

IT'S GOT A GOOD BEAT, BUT...

*There's more than one way
to do the hustle*

BY ANNAROSA SABBADINI

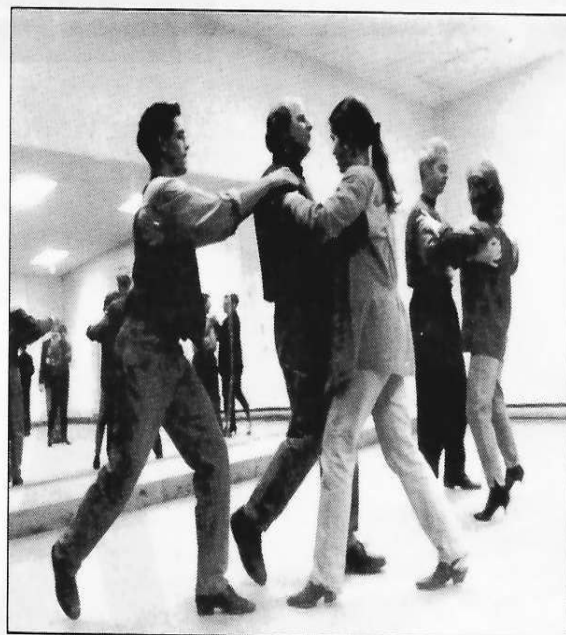
"It's got a good beat, but I can't dance to it." Or so I thought until that fateful day when I attended my very first dance class. Later, with the passing of time, I realized that my love of dance had bounded beyond my fear of flowing to the music. Except, I had grown tired of the pirouettes, piqués and the entrechat six; I wanted drop-spins and high releases, shuffles and the two-step. I wanted the cha cha, and the mamba. Luckily, I discovered that Montreal is a veritable hotbed of dance styles and techniques capable of feeding all my new urges, whatever my style of life and all my taste in music. Here is but a sampling of what I uncovered:

Rhythms In The Key Of Life

Let African dance take you far from the hustle of everyday. Dancers claim African rhythms and moves are one of the best ways to teach your feet solid grounding and control of your body's weight; athletes and aerobic maniacs love the pulsating workout; and everyone has a blast. Here are some of the classes available:

Gumboot, from South Africa, is a style born in the diamond mines during the 1940s. It can be described as a lot of jumping, body slapping, moaning and groaning. In fact, peek into one of Stephane Dorval's Gumboot classes, and you'll see all ages, from all over Montreal, all wearing rubber boots. Hand, boots and bodies generate powerful Zulu rhythms. Addictive. Wed, 20h-21h30. Studio 303, 372 Ste-Catherine W, #303. 393-3771 or 598-5534

The rhythms and moves of the Congo: classes at Studio Danse Nyata Nyata begin this week. After a half-hour warm-up, Zab Maboungou guides



MONIQUE DYKSTRA

you through a powerful one-hour dance-out. This style places a lot of attention on breathing. Though all levels dance in the same class, everyone moves at their own pace. If you think you can't groove, this class is for you. Definitely approachable. Tues and Fri, 18h30-20h, and Sat, 11h30-13h. 4374 St-Laurent, third floor. 849-9781

Oumar N D'iaye incorporates traditional and modern dance in his classes. Lots of music and high energy. Thurs, 19h30-21h and Sun, 18h-19h30. Les Studios du Boulevard des Arts, 551 Mont-Royal E, third floor. 527-7770 or 854-0700

Afro-libro makes coordinating two different movements look easy. Percussionists keep the flow. Tues, 18h-19h30. Le Building Danse, 55 Pine E. 842-1887

Pré-Capoeira was originally an African martial art. Today, Pré-Capoeira

looks a lot like a wild and acrobatic form of Tai-Chi. Excellent for strength, flexibility and agility. Music varies according to class, but expect just about everything. Beginners with Gaëtan Verret, Mon and Thurs, 19h30-21h. Advanced with Natalie Lamarche, Mon, 18h-19h30; Wed and Fri, 9h30-11h. Le Building Danse, 55 Pine E. 842-1887

The Power of Seduction

The sensual style of Baladi, or belly dancing, is probably the most feminine of all dancing styles. Baladi's flowing grace has been likened to a wind in constant motion. As exercise, Baladi, above all, works your abdominal and back muscles. Here are some of Montreal's Baladi instructors:

Aziza runs her own studio and dance troupe. She offers Baladi classes for all levels, Mon-Thurs. 3706 Jean-Talon E. 593-4477

Play Out Your Fantasies

Even the terms that Flamenco follow—palmas, pistos, zapateados—have the power to weave a romantic tale. They say Flamenco dancers have another skin, other passions, instincts and desires. They see the world differently.

L'Académie Flamenca de Montréal takes a serious approach to Flamenco. First, you learn the techniques, then their expression. All levels, days, nights and weekends. Advanced students are given the opportunity to enter the school's dance troupe. 5337 St-Laurent. 948-3430