

# LATER LIFE LEARNING

---

## SERIES A: The Dancing Image

**Mondays, 10:00 – 11:45 am, September 17 to November 26, 2018**  
**No class October 8, 2017 for Thanksgiving**

**Innis College, Town Hall**

**Lecturer: Michael Crabb**

*Author, broadcaster, journalist and lecturer Michael Crabb has been sharing his passion for dance for more than 45 years. Currently dance critic for The Toronto Star, he continues to write for a range of dance publications internationally. From 1977 to 2010, variously as a producer, presenter and contributor at CBC Radio, he was heard regularly coast-to-coast, most notably as host of the award-winning daily programme, The Arts Report.*

### **Overview:**

Dance and moving pictures have a long relationship. While the screen is not a substitute for live performance, it is a great democratiser through its capacity to disseminate dance more widely. Screen versions of costly staged ballet productions are now accessible to mass audiences at affordable prices. Film and video offer technical possibilities and effects unachievable on stage. The dance world itself – exotic and mysterious – is an alluring dramatic subject for movie makers, from *The Red Shoes* to more recent hits such as *The Turning Point* and *Black Swan*. This course will examine the evolution of dance on film and video and the ways these media are deployed to entertain and inform audiences and to expand the potential of dance as an expressive art form.

### **1. Sept. 17: Inside the National Ballet**

This special lecture features National Ballet of Canada Associate Artistic Director Christopher Stowell as he offers behind-the-curtain insights into life at Canada's premier ballet company and talks about his wide-ranging career as a leading dancer, choreographer, teacher and director.

### **2. Sept. 24: Moving Pictures**

Even before the arrival of sound, early filmmakers were drawn to the body in motion and began to explore how dance on the screen could be more than a mere record of a stage performance.

### **3. Oct. 1: Capturing the Moment**

As film and video technology have advanced, it has become increasingly possible to deliver dance originally conceived for the stage to much larger audiences in a compelling way.

# LATER LIFE LEARNING

---

## NO CLASS on October 8th – Thanksgiving

### **4. Oct. 15: Musical Theatre and the Big Screen**

Dance has always been an integral part of musical theatre. It did not take movie-makers long to discover there was money to be made in adapting popular stage musicals for the big screen or in making their own musicals for a cinema audience.

### **5. Oct. 22: The Dancing Image**

Dance on the screen does not have to be a record or adaptation of something originally made for live performance. Increasingly, directors are fascinated by how film and video can generate dance that could only exist in these media. They challenge our notion of performance and dance itself.

### **6. Oct. 29: Portraying the Dance World**

Screenwriters and directors are drawn to the dance world as a dramatic subject because of its perceived exoticism, glamour and beauty. As an elite physical art, the dance world also offers exciting elements of competition and the struggle to achieve.

### **7. Nov. 5: A Controversial Mash-up: Black Swan**

Director Darren Aronofsky's 2010 movie, *Black Swan*, remains controversial. Is it a gross distortion of the ballet world or could it be that offended dance lovers missed the point, that it's primarily a psychological thriller-cum-horror movie that happens to be set in the dance world?

### **8. Nov. 12: Dance as Personal Salvation: Billy Elliot**

In feature movies dance has frequently been used as an agent of, or metaphor for personal growth; never more so than in director Stephen Daldry's hit movie *Billy Elliot* (2000), the story of a boy fulfilling against all odds his dream to become a ballet dancer.

### **9. Nov. 19: Driven by Art: The Red Shoes**

Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *The Red Shoes* (1948), for all its hokeyness, is still often labelled the best dance film ever. It reworks the old backstage intrigue movie trope, mixes it with a dash of star-is-born excitement and pits the complicated love that links its three main protagonists as a fable about the price an ambition for artistic perfection exacts.

### **10. Nov. 26: Magical Moments**

In this concluding class we'll consider some of the greatest dance ever captured on film and what makes it so magical.