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form "Coco," a work for six that focuses on the French designer and is set to songs by Edith Piaf, and "Up," a dance for eight.

"Up," Mr. Canfield's final ballet as artistic director of the company — created in conjunction with the Richard Rodgers centennial — is decidedly more gentle and classical than many of his previous, hard-edged works. Dancers perform radically different interpretations of seven versions of the Rodgers and Hart song "Blue Moon" by artists ranging from the early 60's doo-wop group the Marcells to the alternative rock band the Cowboy Junkies. Mr. Canfield strove to highlight his dancers' individuality by creating eclectic portraits — much like music videos.

"The ballet is about passing down interpretations," he said. "Two dancers can be standing in a room learning the same steps but because of body type and punctuation on movement, it's not going to look the same. In taking the song 'Blue Moon,' it was fascinating the way each artist found something different in the music — in much the same way dancers approach movement. I also wanted to capture the strengths of each dancer individually and collectively."

With a repertory of rock-music ballets and works like "Revenge Poems," a prurient, violent look at a love triangle complete with simulated sex onstage and a murder, set to music by the all-female band Carmina Piranha, Mr. Canfield has often been the subject of controversy. "Revenge Poems," for instance, inspired an editorial with the headline "Portland Family Values" in the local newspaper, The Oregonian, suggesting that Mr. Canfield's ballets should be rated. But for Mr. Canfield, his experiments were a means to broaden audiences and energize ballet with a dose of pop culture.

"I'm an entertainer — and I don't think that's a bad word," he said. "I always wanted to capture the MTV generation because I think in video, the evolution of song is now a short film. It's no longer about words as much as it is the video that's attached to it. My inspiration is about using the discipline of the art form and pop culture. I don't even want to think I'm Balanchine. There are enough people doing that. My object has been to attract a younger audience. If I want to be remembered for anything, it's that I've made dance important in people's lives. So I don't look back and regret any risk I took." □