

with smoke emerging from it, while moving down to the front of the stage. I dropped it!) He laughed, as I'd hoped he would. We exchanged a few more words and then, "I love you, Merce, enjoy the performance." Four days later, he died. What a blessing to be able to say "Good-bye" in such a loving exchange and familiar setting.

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PARIS CALLS

This story starts sixty years earlier, shortly after the cauldron of destruction that was World War II had ended. Peace was followed in the western world by an explosion of artistic creativity, first in Paris, later in New York. All the collective energy and attention that had been directed toward winning the war were now available for personal creativity and individual exploration.

Drawn by the excitement and fervor of Paris, a young generation of students and artists of all persuasions poured into the city's winding streets and inexpensive hotels and garrets. An exchange rate of three hundred francs to the dollar made a year of life in France cost about the equivalent of one or two months in America. How gracious and inviting was that!

I was twenty years old when I first met Merce in 1949, near the end of my transformative year in Paris, attending *Éducation par le Jeu Dramatique* (ÉPJD—Education through Dramatic Play), the drama school founded by the radical and influential director/actor

Jean-Louis Barrault. I had come to Paris in 1948, after two years at Cornell University, with the intention of taking part in the Junior Year Abroad program at the Sorbonne, sponsored by Sweetbriar College. That intention was radically altered within a month after my arrival.