

The Little Company That Could

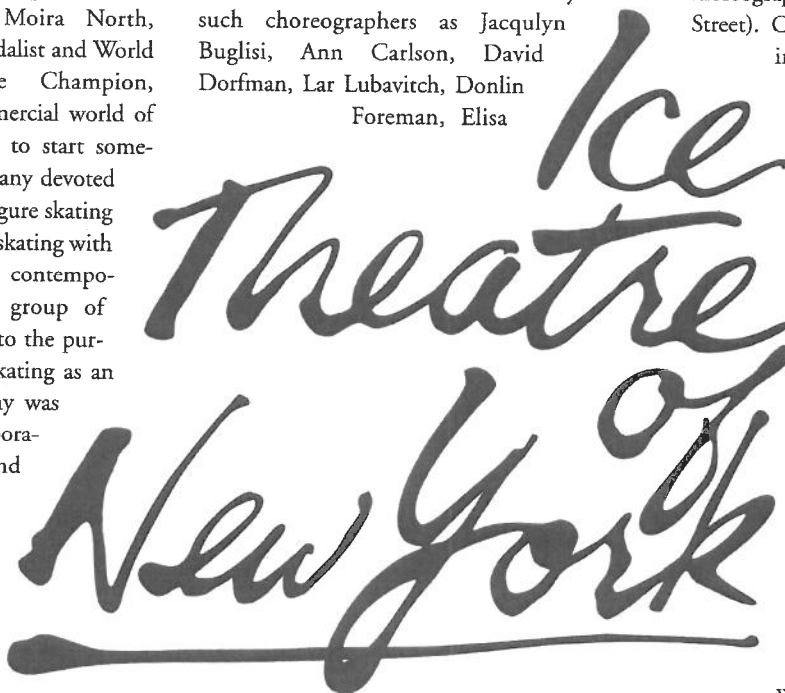
Ice Theatre of New York is celebrating its 20th Anniversary! Twenty years of dreams, determination, and ingenuity, and Ice Theatre has indeed proven itself to be "the little company that could." Fueled by the passion and tenacity of its founder, Moira North, and the numerous skaters who supplied their love and talents, Ice Theatre of New York has become the country's premier artistic dance-on-ice troupe.

It was 1984 when Moira North, Canadian Gold Dance Medalist and World Professional Free-Dance Champion, decided to leave the commercial world of professional figure skating to start something brand new – a company devoted to creating purely artistic figure skating that would combine figure skating with dance (both classical and contemporary). Moira gathered a group of kindred skaters, dedicated to the pursuit of developing figure skating as an art form, and the company was founded. Company incorporation, board meetings and off-ice training followed and took place at Ms. North's own fifth-floor walk-up loft space. Ice Theatre was on track toward excellence!

The little company short on money but big on dreams, replete with the dedication of its members, started rehearsing at midnight (when the ice was free of charge) at the old Sky Rink at West 33rd Street and 10th Avenue. Ice Theatre's first production in 1985 attracted 300 spectators – who were asked to bring their own chairs. One evening, during a performance, the Zamboni broke down in the middle of the ice. Undaunted and just like the little red engine that thought he could, the skaters pushed the massive machine off the rink themselves and the show went on. And on... for 20 years, and is still going strong.

Ice Theatre of New York received the first grants ever given to a dance-on-ice company from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts.

Ice Theatre moved to the Chelsea Piers complex when it first opened in 1995. Ever since, Ice Theatre has gathered steam and added flare to Sky Rink's figure skating events with new artistic works on ice by such choreographers as Jacquelyn Buglisi, Ann Carlson, David Dorfman, Lar Lubavitch, Donlin Foreman, Elisa



Monte, and the late Carlos Orta. Joining Ice Theatre as guest artists at Sky Rink in the past include Olympic Gold medalist Oksana Baiul, two-time Olympic Bronze medalist Lu Chen and "Queen of Spin" Lucinda Ruh. Last year, Ice Theatre held its autumn fundraising gala at Sky Rink and The Lighthouse, honoring designer Vera Wang, who was a competitive figure skater herself. This year the Company will honor Moira and the Company, past and present, at Sky Rink and The Lighthouse on October 13th.

This performance season, Ice Theatre will present a new work by dance choreog-

rapher David Parsons, who choreographed for the Times Square 2000 millennium celebration, among other projects, and heads his own nationally known dance company. Ice Theatre will also present "The Lottery," a second Ice Theatre commission by dance choreographer Heather Harrington (Harrington was recently commissioned by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council to choreograph a site-specific work on Wall Street). Other pieces that will be shown

include "Cracked Ice," an ensemble piece created by prima ballerina/skater Katherine Healy, and a new ensemble work by Olympian David Liu.

Throughout its performance season, Ice Theatre will also reset some previously performed pieces, to reflect Ice Theatre's inherent diversity. These works will be presented at the Winter Festival at Sky Rink December 27-30th, and are co-presented this year by Chelsea Piers.

Ice Theatre will continue this year with its signature outreach program, New Works and Young Artists

Series at Riverbank State Park, and will return for its 19th Season of the Rockefeller Concert Series, performed at the Rink at Rockefeller Plaza. Ice Theatre certainly has made tracks toward to creating this new genre of performing arts.

Today, Ice Theatre looks forward to what's ahead: Winter Festivals in Canada and abroad, performances on the proscenium stage; a whole new world awaits. And, because of Moira's and the ensemble members' vision and tenacity, there are Ice Theatres popping up across the U.S. and in Canada. The little company that could certainly did!