

Dilley: an intellectual and a mystic

by Edd Hansen

The Halifax dance audience were treated to a special visit by a unique and thought-provoking dancer, Barbara Dilley.

Dilley has been dancing and making dances for 25 years.

Having early training in classical

ballet, she lived and studied in New York City and performed professionally with the Merce Cunningham Dance Co. (1963-1968).

At the present time, Ms. Dilley is directing the Dance Program at Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colo-

rado. She teaches disciplines of improvisation and experimental composition as well as technique classes. Her art is concerned with the practice of non-aggression in the creative process. She recently performed two events in Halifax, the

first (28 Feb/83) a public talk and demonstration entitled *Art in Everyday Life*, and the second (5 Mar/83) a solo improvisational dance concert entitled *Whales, Bach and Other Things*.

Last Saturday evening I was not at all disappointed after the week's anticipation. Three solo improvisations were presented, quite different from each other in mood, technique, and accompaniment. Music before and after the show (Keith Jarrett), and between pieces (Philip Glass and Robert Wilson), if intended to create an atmosphere over and above that created by the dance, was utterly lost on me — I could have readily done without it. The dance pieces, however, were quite another story. First of all, Dilley is a great dancer, strong and flawless in technique and presentation, in this case improvisation. Unfortunately, the audience was a small one.

The first piece, *Dance for the Nagas*, was accompanied by whale vocalizations (prod: R. Payne). A masked, robed figure moved with a graceful, noiseless grandeur, using the whale's sequences and repetitions for inspiration. The whale's story telling was reflected in her dance, impenetrable yet also beautiful, both in the same majestic way of the whales.

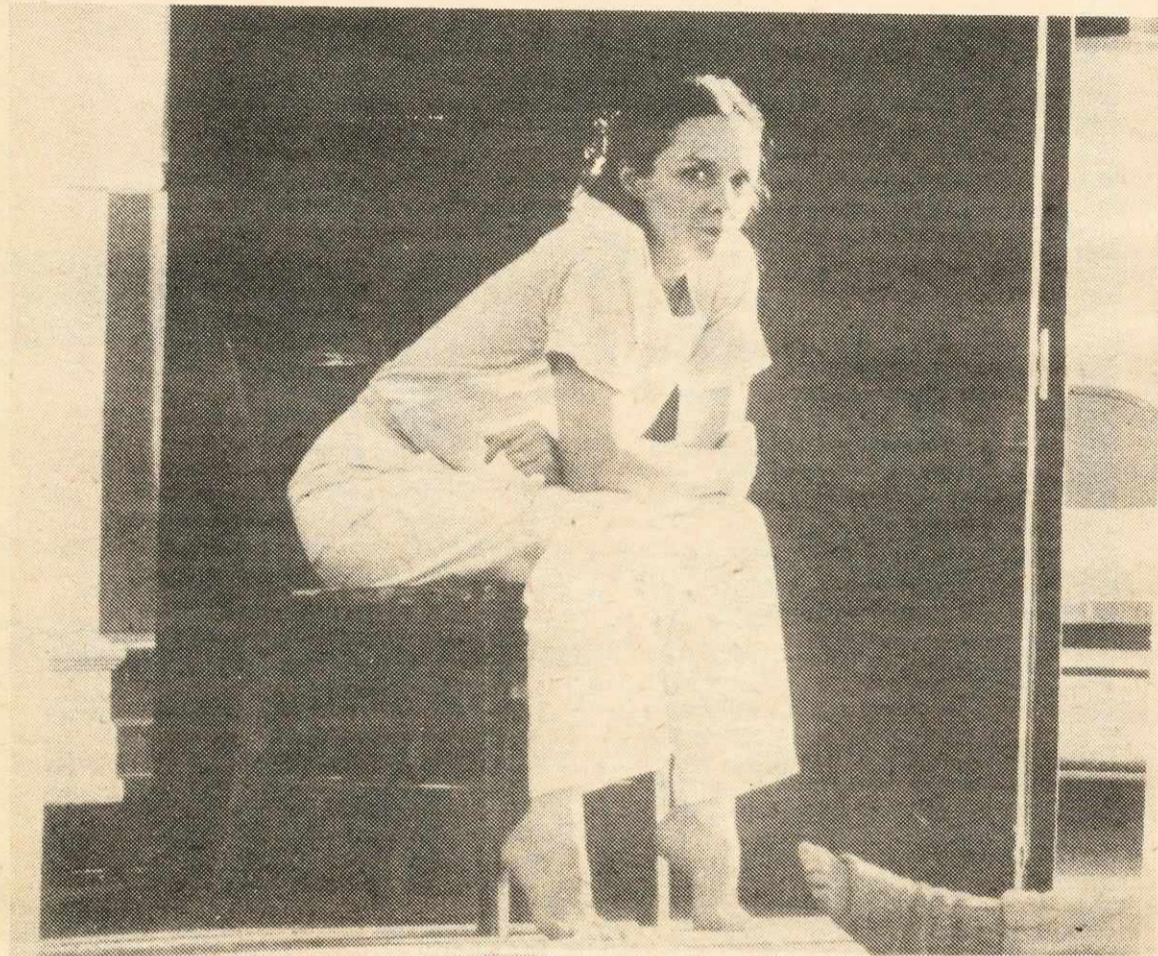
The setting of the rectangular space using red yard preceded the second piece, *Backyard and Bach*. Wearing black business attire, Dilley first circumscribed this space in slow motion, finally entering it in a backwards spiral as if that were the only way in. The three parts of this piece, although different in style, all dealt with space exploration. The first, accompanied by Eastern rhythms (Robert Ashley) exhibited movement akin to Dylan Thomas' poetry — its meaning and coherence were defined by and as its profession. The second part comprised

a show of balletic strength which I did not want to end. Both this and the third part were accompanied by Bach Suites (Pierre Fournier). The last part of the second piece demonstrated movement that dealt with space as if with a malleable entity — one that can also "handle" you back.

The third and last piece of the evening was entitled *Doha*; dohas are "spontaneous songs of devotion arising from the experiences of meditation practice." This presentation was self-accompanied by Dilley's bell-like voice during developing forays into the rectangular space, sometimes to humorous ends. Escapes from the rectangle reverted to non-dance, the space becoming a gauntlet to be experienced and run. The space became the meditational 'centre' for inspired (inner-driven) movement, reflecting doha experiences for whatever emotional worth and quality.

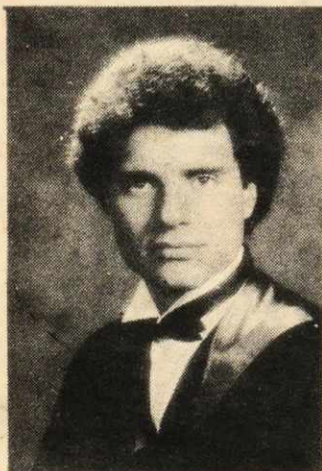
I think the best example of creative process as art is in improvisational dance; it is one of the few examples which does not end self-indulgently, probably because of the "presence" of the audience. Unfortunately, something improvised is something lost from recordable, usable dance history; no VTR devices, no choreographic notation are there to hang on the Art, only other (present) dancers and choreographers can learn from it. Generations learning from them will never know the roots of their philosophy, but for the recorded prose of Dilley:

"All art of improvisation is concerned with direct response, both to the inner and outer worlds. Not only the performer, but also the audience and the space create the dance. These solos are somewhat private yet are intended to communicate the experiences one does have."



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ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

NANCY GARAPICK SWIMMING

Nancy established three CIAU records and was a member of two relay teams that also set CIAU records during the CIAU Championships at Sherbrooke, Quebec. Garapick, a 21 year old first year science student from Halifax, established marks in 200 IM, 200 back and 200 free style. She was also on the winning 4 x 100 and 4 x 200 free style relay teams. Nancy has twice been CIAU Athlete of the Week and four times Dalhousie's Athlete of the Week this year.

NEAL MEGANNETY HOCKEY



Neal scored an important goal in Dalhousie's 4-3 final series win against Moncton last Thursday. He was outstanding during the two weekend games in Moncton, hustling in both games as the Tigers lost out in their bid for the AUAA championship. Megannety is a second year recreation student from Montreal.