

Is The Deerhunter propoganda?

By Ara Rose Parker

In this age and decade of passivity and unashamed apathy a violent outcry or plea might go unacknowledged. It is a shame that this has happened. Perhaps it is a result of an embarrassment over the sixties protestations which now seem to have been unsuccessful in effectively changing the fundamental state of societal affairs.

In *The Deer Hunter*, director Michael Cimino presents us with a view of middle-America short-circuited, portrayed in a rather dismal and uninteresting manner, lacking originality in direction from choice of locals to a decision to put music of a Rocky sentimental nature under long sequences which were starving for dialogue. Next were the horrors of life at the front ("send me where the bullets are flying.") Finally, a somewhat weak conclusion which begins as the anti-heroes' hero, Michael, confronts his buddy only to realize that he has lost control of the situation and can no longer rescue his friend Nick from the corruption which eventually leads to Nick's death. The ending, which brings what is left of the gang back to the good 'ole USA to sing the national anthem over their scrambled eggs and coffee did little for the artistic merit of the film. It did confirm any suspicions left at that point that this film was saying much more than what the audience was supposed to be hearing on a conscious level and yet must have been understanding subliminally.

SHOOTING IN THAILAND

The on location shooting in Thailand where we see a reenactment of some encounters between the Americans and the Vietnamese is also worthy of analysis. These sequences take us from the leisurely preamble of the first part of *The Deerhunter* into some of the most sensationalist footage since *The Exorcist*. Within three minutes we are witness to mass homicides of innocent villagers which build the tension up to a macabre survival game of 'Russian' roulette. This 'game' is shown as a torturous amusement for Vietnamese officers and soldiers as they hand a gun to two prisoners. The despair is painful as we see Nick and Michael witness their friends near suicide and subsequently their own confrontation with the gun.

Such scenes of hopelessness and personal survival decisions are reminiscent of horrific Holocaust stories. The difference is that Michael and Nick outwit the Vietnamese, exit in true Hollywood root'em shoot'em style, save their friend and make it to safety. Meanwhile the audience is left in terror and hatred of anyone who

looks remotely Vietnamese. As a matter of fact even the allies looked bad; we were shown only prostitutes, hordes of fleeing villagers, gangsters and mistrusting soldiers. Needless to say, the audience appeared to be entirely uncritical or skeptical of this approach.

Yes there were moments that were touching, but there were also moments when one should have

walked out of the theatre in protest of such violence. It was anything but cathartic. I am glad however that I did stay to understand what is actually happening with this film. It is not another violent flick or touching melodrama. It has as much of an effect on people's prejudices as *Triumph of the Will* had in stirring up nationalist Nazi sentiments.

Why are the audiences sup-

portive? Even more questionable is the attitude of the director and reviewers who applaud all aspects of this affront to human dignity. War is ugly, but this film does not begin to show the atrocities which actually went on, I contend, and fear that this was not even its purpose.

The performances were in some cases very good and on a menial level *The Deerhunter* is involving

However, these elements do not justify such political propoganda to be exploited in a commercial entity which is reaching millions of people.

The blame is as much with an uneducated audience, seemingly unaware of what is really going on in front of them on the screen and in world politics as with those involved with the production of *The Deerhunter*.

High calibre Dancemakers undersell talents

By Alina Gildiner

Dancemakers could probably boast of having five of the best modern dancers currently working in Canada. The company members, without exception, are such high calibre performers that watching them move is almost reason enough to attend a *Dancemakers* show.

That is why it is particularly disappointing to see them performing works that undersell their talents. The five pieces the com-

joyous celebration of dancing, AKA, the program tapped into the audience's range of possible response with the caressing exactitude of a sculptor's chisel.

Karen Rimmer's *Spiral* mapped out a twisting, harrowing journey into the recesses of a madness that made me both long for the dance to end so I could relax again, and wish that it would go on much longer because of its sheer fascination. The movements alternately combined violence with gentility, while the musical

collage drifted from lyrical scores to demonically frenetic, unintelligible whispering, creating the quality of a nightmare you can't quite escape, that compels you.

Unfortunately, Barry Smith's *Galliard* lacked the ebullience I have seen it performed with before. Usually a flowing, delightful work, *Dancemakers'* resurrection of it from their repertory of a few years back retained some of *Galliard's* charm but none of its exuberance or power.

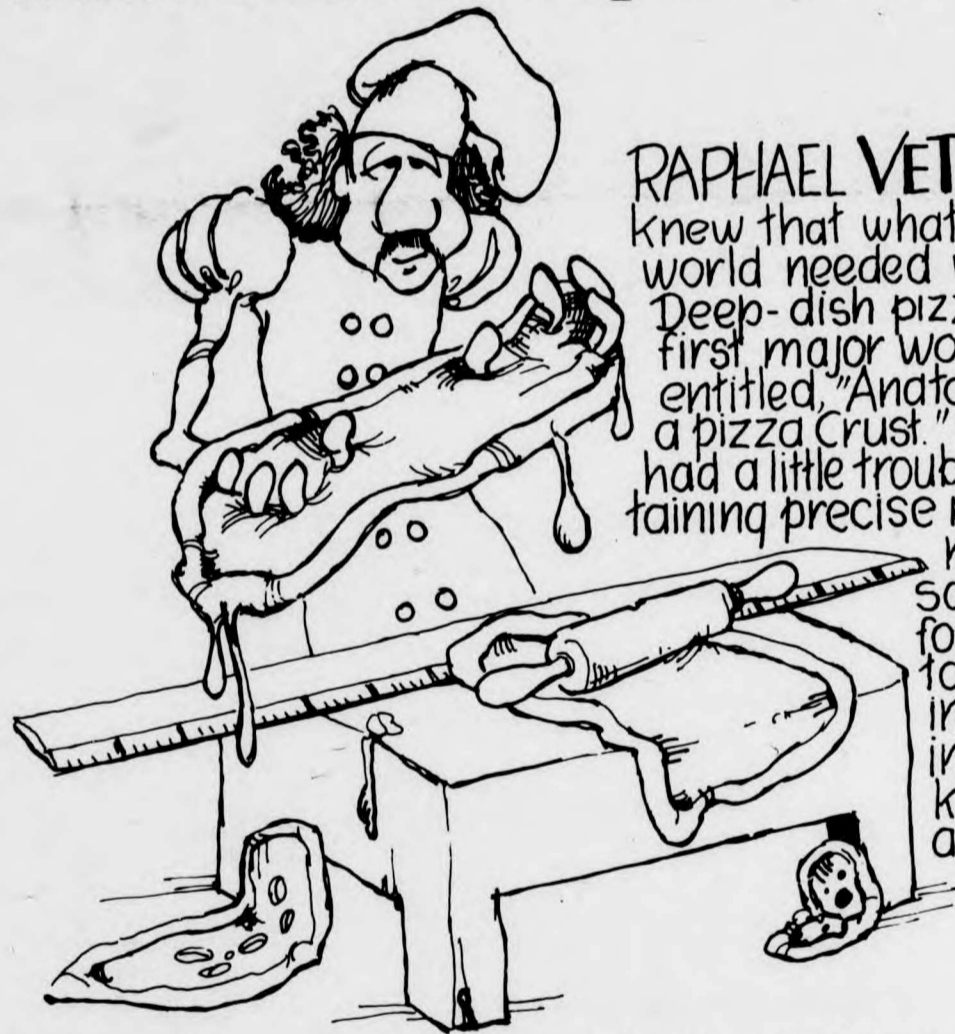
Even so, the company's 1979 spring season presents one of the best programs it has shown since it was founded in 1974 by former York dance students, Andrea Ciel Smith and Marcy Radler. The five current members — Patricia Fraser, Peggy Baker, Patricia Miner, Keith Urban, and Allan James — bring not only great dancing ability to their work, but each also has personal performing qualities that combine to keep *Dancemakers* a uniquely interesting and very alive company.



pany presented in their show at the Bathurst Street Theatre last week were mostly fresh, exciting works for the mind and eye. Donald McKayle's *Variations on a Summer's Theme*, which opened the program, could however have used some choreographic editing. A gambolling, pleasurable work, it too often abandoned its own strengths to rehash worn traditional dance themes.

The remaining four pieces, however, made brilliant use of the company's numerous talents. Ranging from the intensely cerebral quality of Paula Ravits's *Pole Fiction* to Anna Blewchamp's

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