A fool's table displays bizarre artistry

Robert Desrosiers Dance has improbable dream

It's a myth that performing artists are, by their vocation, adventurous. Timid safety-seekers are found as frequently onstage as they are off. And in Toronto, the adventurous ones are rare: T.I.D.E. and the Robert Desrosiers / Theatre Company are among the small handful.

From Dec. 17 to Dec. 19, the

auditorium of Toronto's Castle Frank High School will be taken over by Desrosiers for his latest show, A Fool's Table. The programme will consist of two works-Bad Weather and the longer title work. If Desrosier's record is any guideline, the evening will be peculiar but exciting.

In 1981, at Harbourfront, Desro-

Robert Desrosiers Dance Theatre Castle Frank High School

Dec. 18, 19 \$6. (preview Dec. 17) 8 p.m. (near Castle Frank subway)

siers turned a bird into a woman and a mammal into a maniac. A waiter offered a live head on a platter and beady-eyed creatures were shot down as they did a soft-shoe routine.

The only clue Desrosiers offers about his Castle Frank show is that its imagery is related to societal development. Medieval Europe stumbled into the Dark Ages before crawling toward the Renaissance.

Although, Desrosiers works independently of any particular dance doctrine, he does not lack this kind of exposure. He graduated from the National Ballet School into the National Ballet of Canada. He lasted nearly a year on a diet of classical ballet. Desrosiers also worked with the Toronto Dance Theatre, a group influenced by the teachings of Martha Graham, a modern dance pioneer.

Between rounds with these two dance companies, Desrosiers studied with Lindsay Kemp, the English performance artist. Kemp uses masks and mime, but it is his use of time distortion and non-linear thought thought patterns that create his radical theatre.

His association with Kemp as well as certain aesthetic similarities have resulted in Desrosiers being compared with the English artist, especially by reviewers who could not make sense of Desrosiers in any other way.

However, 'making sense' of Desrosiers and his work is decidedly pointless, if 'making sense' means quick rational analysis. His work to date is more a sensory experience than readily-categorized stage work. Pieces such as "Night Clown" and "Brass Fountain" demand complete attention from the audience but, conversely, disallow instant intellectualism. The bowl of fire, tight-rope walker or discordant music are only a few in a shower of images. By 'thinking' the audience might not be completely aware sensorily. A moment missed in a Desrosiers piece is an image missed.

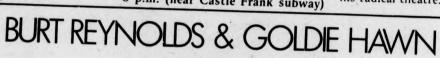
Ironically, Desrosiers invests his work with tremendous thought. Very little is spontaneous once the work is set. Steps are memorized, routines patterned and music scored. He also hand-picks his coworkers.

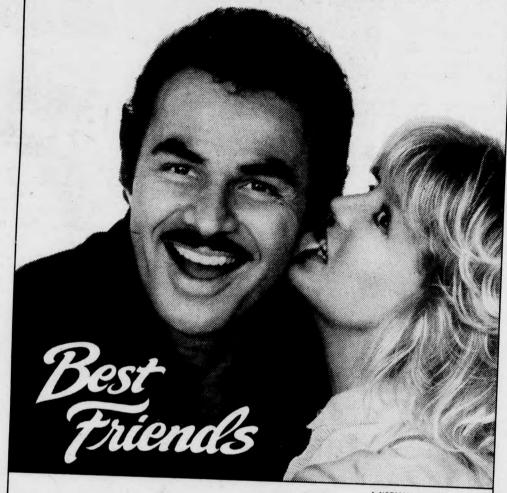
Desrosier's wife, Claudia Moore will perform in A Fool's Table. She also trained at the National Ballet School and has danced with various companies and independent choreographers, receiving consistently high praise. She performs with a grace yet occasional ferocity that defines Moore as a unique artist. Like Desrosier, she studied with Lindsay

However, Moore is not only a performer in A rool's Table, as she contributes to production and design. She has also choreographed works independently of her husband's company.

Joining Desrosiers and Moore for A Fool's Table are dancer David Wood and composer Gordon Phillips, both teachers at York. This production also presents poet Albert Gedraitis and jugglers.

A Fool's Table may sound a little mad, a little beyond your immediate grasp. It may be unlike anything seen in the Castle Frank auditorium. But Toronto has a real lack of affordable theatre space. And, the irony is suited to Robert Desrosiers and company.





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