

Developing far beyond predictions

York's dancers show enthusiasm, vigor and joy

By ADRIAN HILL

A short four years ago York's Program in Dance boldly began recruiting students and teachers. Since then, the program has developed far beyond predictions. The York Dancers' performance in the week before the Christmas break was not only their finest one to date, but for the first time, approached the level of a young professional company.

The first piece, choreographed by Al Huang, was beautifully adapted to the ability of the dancers. As an ensemble, it hung together with a slow movement of tranquility and passion. Faces were sadly neglected by Huang in this otherwise clever interpretation of variations on T'aiChi meditation exercises.

In Quartet, David LeHay displayed the ability characteristic of ballet — appearing lighter than air. He worked tirelessly through the piece, easily stealing the show. Although the piece enjoyed an exciting beginning with fine-tempered movement, the choreography let the dancers down half-way through and strain as they would, none could resurrect the gaping hole in the movement. Quartet might have better conceived had it ended at this half-way point, for once this piece lost its fine discipline, it also lost its attraction.

A Parting was a gay, frolicking encounter with back-and-forth, gentle embraces, and light, airy leaps hither and yon. The humorous effect of the duo tiptoeing their way through their farewell brought a smile to everyone's face. Noelyn George played her flitting and seductive role grandly — her concentration did not interfere with the character she displayed.

Collage was the last ballet for the evening. Grant Strate treated us to six dancers performing solos simultaneously. It's an unusual idea, but one well adapted to the ability of a young group of dancers. Rather than place all the pressure on one soloist, Collage allowed the type of exciting movement not possible in ensemble works to be exhibited by a group. It allowed the collective strength of the group to overshadow the inadequacies of the individual dancers. Each soloist fought to gain the attention of the audience so that the centre of interest changed from one dancer to another. Nadine MacDonald complemented the piece with an

original score that was a perfect accompaniment to the mood and movement of the dance.

The high point of the evening was Bob Cohan's Mass. Cohan, a leading figure in contemporary dance, has been a guest instructor at York. It was thoroughly creative and dramatic, utilising all the potential of the dancers. It pushed their technique to its outer limits while remaining within the penumbra of their experience.

The piece symbolized the duality of the human experience of interaction — the two-sided nature of man as a part of a whole. Wave motions flowing through a sea of dancers showed man as a purely biological automaton; he was like a sea of insects with their communal synapse of sensual perception. Lacking mind and personality, the individual only barely held claim to that nomenclature as his body balanced on the line between organ and organism. As the piece developed, the other side of man as a part of the whole came to the fore as the individuality of human suffering made us painfully aware of each separate entity.

The dancers showed an enthusiasm for movement that is often lost in Martha Graham's classical technique. Cohan was not afraid to use new ideas to unite the dancers' enthusiasm with new choreography. Rather than force his pupils to use conventional lifts which are both difficult and dangerous to the young dancer, he developed a series of "close-body" lifts to attain his ends. As a one time fire marshal, I would dub his movements "Variations On A Fireman's Lift".

Susan Macpherson, of the Toronto Dance Theatre designed costumes to add another reminder that York's dancers are very close to bridging that gap between student and professional. The lighting, provided by York's theatre students was most effective.

York's dancers made mistakes — the evening was full of slips, falls, and shakes. The odd face exhibited the inner terror that the dancers surely felt. Yet none of this was important, for the enthusiasm, vigor, and joy that the dancers bestowed upon the audience was far more valuable. York's dance students are not professionals, but they put on a performance that showed they are closer than they have ever been before.



A week before the Christmas break, York's program in dance put on a performance with original works by members of the fine arts faculty. Reporter Hill said that "for the first time, the dancers approached the level of a young professional company."



Good Eats

How to use leftovers

By HARRY STINSON

This article draws its timeliness not only from the annual holiday aftermath and its inherent dilemmas, but the fashionable recycling movement these days. But first, keep in mind this case, dredged up from Time magazine and cited in Joy of Cooking: "In Memphis, a queasy husband seeking a divorce, complained to the court that his wife had cooked him up a one-dish breakfast composed of a layer of beans, one of sardines, one of salmon, topped with a cake." (Divorce, incidentally, was granted).

Bread is no doubt one of the cheapest, most common, and most versatile holdovers. Aside from the obvious breadcrumbs for crusts, dressings, coatings for fried items, and croutons for salad and soup, be sure to try the inadequately appreciated glories of Bread Pudding.

For 6 servings (or four real servings), soak 3-1/3 cups stale bread or disreputable cake or reasonable facsimile thereof (5 cups fresh) in 3 cups warm milk. (The bread should be ruthlessly trimmed and decimated, but not packed for measuring purposes). Shake in 1/4 tsp. salt. Meanwhile, toss 3 egg yolks, 1/3 to 1/2 cup sugar, 1 tsp. vanilla, and a dash of favourite flavouring (such as nutmeg) into a bowl and unleash your aggressions upon them (beat well). At this point you may also add some raisins, fruits, or other creative leftovers, and spill the lot over the soaked bread, blending the result smoothly. The whites of the eggs (beaten stiff) may now be folded in or combined with 1 8 tsp. salt, 6 tbsp. sugar, and 1/2 tsp. vanilla to form a meringue. In any case, bake the pudding at 350 for about 3/4 hour. Set the dish in a pan of hot water in the oven. Cool then top with meringue and stick it back in at 300 for about 1/4 hour. Serve hot with sauces, juice, syrup or something fancy.

But bread is the least worrisome and least costly leftover: what's to be done with those incompletely massacred but sorrowful looking roasts, chickens, turkeys, fish, etc., and uninspired limp and soggy vegetables? An elegant comeback is the Tetrazzini, which is quite simply a conglomeration of noodles, sauce (such as chicken stock, or even some cream-of-something soup), vegetables such as onion, green pepper, celery, peas, or you name it, in which you secrete the offending meat, fish or fowl (all chopped up, or shredded). The magic ingredient is to grate in lots of cheddar cheese, or parmesan, or any cheese. But this jacks up the cost, thus defeating the whole purpose.

The key to leftover wizardry is a blender, because nearly anything can be ground up into a tasty sauce or batter (with the help of a little seasoning), and either poured over or added to dishes. Not even sandwiches need go to waste — just toast or broil them; coat in a batter and bake; or slather them with a hot sauce or gravy; or put the leftovers inside as filler. And sour dairy products (milk, cream, etc.) are great for baking. Leftover anything (practically) can be baked into a meat loaf — especially elderly vegetables, cheese, soup. Presto, you have your whole meal baked into one hefty chunk (cover it with one of your leftover sauces). The same result on a different level is achieved by dumping what-have-you into soup and calling it vegetable soup.

See what a little imagination can do.

Both are winners, see them

By LYNN SLOTKIN

The St. Lawrence Centre finally has a success in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night.

The tale involves mistaken identity and a sort of lover's rectangle, as opposed to triangle. It's rife with comic business and director Leon Major takes full advantage of it. But he seems to disregard the serious moments of the play, and this causes problems.

Richard Monette as Orsino doesn't manage to convey the depression he is supposed to be experiencing when Olivia rejects his love. There is poetry and music in the words but not in his acting. He comes off stiff and one dimensional. Domini Blythe as Viola starts out flatly in her initial

scenes. One would never know from her performance that Viola is in agony over the uncertainty of her brother's safety. But Blythe grows in the part, and when she pleads Orsino's love to Olivia, she shows great moments of passion and spirit. Vivian Reis as Olivia also has problems in the beginning. She appears to burlesque the ritual of praying for her dead brother so that the sincerity of her mourning seems questionable. However, as the play progresses she, too, grows in the part. She gives a sense of ease and dignity to Olivia.

Robert Benson as Malvolio steals the show. He is comic as the serious, dignified, duped servant, and tragic in the mad scene. But his success at conveying the serious aspects of Malvolio unbalances the play, and the mad scene especially seems out of place. If Monette, Blythe and Reis would better realize their sombre moments, the play would retain its balance.

Consistent costuming seems to be a problem at the Centre. In the last production, The Trial, the costumes were a conglomeration of different styles from different times and places. Robert Boyle's designs are no different. They range from flashy ultra-modern North American, to drab old English and black Spanish.

There are problems in this production, but not enough to destroy Shakespeare's delightful script. And Major's ability to

enhance the comic elements makes the production more worthwhile.

ELECTRIFYING DON JUAN

Lack of space prevents a fuller review of Don Juan In Hell at the O'Keefe Centre, but to say you would be spending your money wisely is an understatement.

The play, by Shaw, is part of his larger work, Man and Superman, and it involves a four way conversation between Don Juan, his old love Dona Ana, her father the Commander, and the Devil. Shaw as usual is verbose, but with this excellent cast of four, it's hard to become bored.

Ricardo Montalban as Don Juan, is sure, easy and electrifying; Agnes Moorehead as Dona Ana is haughty, expressive, and can make a flip of the page or glance as meaningful as a powerful speech; Paul Henreid as the Commander has a carefree air about him that makes his performance delightful; and Edward Mulhare gives his part of the Devil a certain richness and sophistication. It only plays until Saturday.

The productions have reasonable student rates, and considering the quality of the material it will be money well spent.

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