

# ENTERTAINMENT

Phys Ed Dept. concert

## Hearty response to naive but serious dancing athletes

PAULETTE PEIROL

The full house of spectators at *The Spring Dance Concert* presented by the York Physical Education department last week, caught spring fever from the enthusiastic dancers. As a degree requirement for York's Phys. Ed. programme, students must take 'practicum' courses. Modern dance, jazz, *Creativity in Dance* and modern rhythmic gymnastics are offered as 'activity programmes' to fill this requirement.

The annual *Spring Dance Concert* is "mainly a showcase to show the student's work," says Paula Thomp-

son, organizer of the concert. Thompson explains "the concert shows what can be done by non-dancers, since they were able to present reasonable dance. The joy of it is that they're still operating out of naivete, but they're also serious about it."

The students themselves choreographed the pieces, with advice, but not restriction, from Thompson. The main objective of the performance is to educate students about dance. "Who knows?" says Thompson. "They may someday watch dance on T.V. or even venture into a theatre."

Unfortunately, the performance started on a rusty note, or rather no note at all, as there were difficulties with the sound system. Just as the recent snowstorm put damper on the hopes of a warm spring, the audio difficulties put a damper on the dancers' confidence. However, when the confusion was sorted out, the dancers regained their self-assurance.

*Adagio* (finally) began with 11 gymnasts showing their lyrical qualities with flowing arm movements. Although the dancing was not always synchronized, it did maintain the general continuity necessary for an adagio piece. Gymnasts are talented when it comes to effectively utilizing large floor spaces, and Tamara Bompas echoes this skill in her choreography.

*Morning Edition* brings to life stereotypical newspaper characters, with an underlying "I read the news today, oh boy..." tone. The main character wakes up on a park bench and staggers in a drunken stupor to literally uncover the morning news. The five uncovered dancers (the 'morning news'), then enact the day's events. Mime is used to humourously portray the activities of such personalities as rock stars, fashion models, royalty, criminals, and athletes. The athletic segments using all six characters were more kinetic and lively than the solos, and the audience responded with hearty applause.

*Primordial Stew* is a surreal modern dance to music by Pink Floyd's *The Wall*. The question "Is there anybody out there?" is answered by primordial aliens slinking along the floor. Yes, there are people "out there", but their existence seems to be as ambiguous as their dancing.

*Coquillages* explores kinetic dance using both synchronized and

sequential group movement. Like a carefully balanced row of cards, stacked back to back, the movement of one dancer sets off a chain reaction of movement. The piece progresses from synchronized floor movement to running and leaping, then, returns back to floor level, using free-falls. This type of dance relies on the dancer's awareness of the other bodies moving around her, so that the dancers as a group present a harmonious flow of movement. When achieved in *Coquillages*, this effect was visually pleasing.

The highlight of the performance, which was coincidentally also most technically difficult, was *Ribbons in Motion*. The amount of coordination and dexterity required to create intricate patterns with 20-foot ribbons in mid-air is great--the 11

talented gymnasts not only possessed this skill, but added finesse and grace, thereby transcending the fine line between athletics and art.

*Zero-Zero* is an appropriate name for the pretentious piece which followed *Ribbons in Motion*. The bodies of the four male dancers were close to perfect 'tens'. However, the limited use of these 'tens' amounted to zero. Whereas *Ribbons in Motion* expands athletic movement into art, *Zero-Zero* reduces the artistry of modern dance into pushups without personality.

*In The Mood*, to music of the same title, begins as a feeble attempt to mimic the showdancing style of tantalizing arms and legs. Four female dancers strut onstage and proceed to take off parts of their

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Debbie Kirkwood

A dancer's awareness of other bodies.

## York theatre moves downtown, Pericles takes calculated risks

W. HURST

The York graduate theatre programme is mounting Shakespeare's *Pericles* in an innovative and important production. For the first time, a York student production will be co-sponsored by a professional company, the Toronto Free Theatre. This type of venture will give the grad students a downtown venue with all the bonuses, such as a wider public access and a professional working space. *Pericles* will be a crucial test for the expertise of the students as well as the graduate programme itself.

On an actor's resume, the *who* is important: prospective employers look at who an actor has worked with. A graduate degree in theatre is only important if a company knows the quality of the teaching. The

quality at York is excellent. David Smukler, Director of the graduate programme, is one of the foremost teachers in Canadian theatre and he is a vocal coach for the Stratford Festival this season. Associate Director, Michele George has worked with the brilliant Peter Brooks in Paris and at La Mama, the vanguard of all that was exciting in New York theatre in the last two decades. George is directing *Pericles*.

*Pericles* is not performed often and there is some dispute as to whether Shakespeare is the author. However, George sees the work not only as an excellent play but as a perfect vehicle for her students. Produced in an Arabian Nights style, this production has two narrators and a wealth of characters. Therefore, students must take on the responsibility of numerous characters, a feat many already-professional actors could not manage. Director George has engaged three musicians (Geoffrey Clarfield, Judith Cohen and Michael Franklin) that is evocative of the Mediterranean countries of *Pericles'* travels. The music not only evokes a mood for the actors; it should also be a continuum for the audience, as locales keep shifting.

With an extensive theatre background, any director might be tempted to impose a particular, dogmatic attitude on student actors. Not George. Probably because of her work with truly experimental groups like La Mama, George sees herself as a good gardener, planting and nurturing the seeds for creative development. She said, during a rehearsal break, "You put on all types of shit and finally find the right shit." She allows the actor to create a role, not just perform it.

In rehearsals this creative process is palpable. Whether practicing a chant or running a scene, the students use more than their voices to act. Bodies sway with the phrases of the music, tense and relax according to the demands of the scenes being played.

With *Pericles*, George and her cast are taking a risk but it's a calculated one: The play is full of magic and exoticism and these people are trying to make these qualities personal, so that they might make them powerful for the audience.

*Pericles*  
Toronto Free Theatre  
(previews April 18, 19)  
opens April 20 at 7:30  
all other performances at 8:00  
368-2856

### ADDENDA

Inadvertently, *Excal*'s review of the York dance department concert did not mention the contribution of Dr. Mary Jane Warner. Warner taught *Water Study* to the student cast. Therefore, her contribution cannot be overestimated. Our apologies for not giving credit where, and when, credit is due.

W.H.

### NEXT WEEK

Last but certainly not least . . .

Lotsa extracks  
Geometry  
No dance!

GIRLS?

PENGUINS?

Art Gallery of  
York University

## AGI POSTER EXHIBITION

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## The Peel County FELLOWS

ANNOUNCES

THE FOLLOWING

SPECIAL VALUES

Twilight dinner menu will be extended ALL NIGHT to full-time students presenting York University student card prior to ordering.

Steak & Crab	\$ 13.50
Meaty Back Ribs	\$ 12.50
Fisherman's Catch of the Day	\$ 11.95
Brochette of Beef	\$ 12.95
Roast Prime Rib of Beef	\$ 12.95

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