

WACKY DANCE FRENZY AT NOON!

Danny Grossman's roots as an individual and as a creative artist are bedded deep in a single principle -- a questioning of the conventional, an unwillingness to settle for the status quo.

Son of a Polish-Hungarian Jewish father and an Irish Catholic mother, he grew up in a strongly politicized household in California (he walked his first picket line when he was 10, and as a student took part in the historic Berkely demonstrations of the 1960's) and it's from this background of committed social awareness that he derives the humanistic concerns that animate much of his work.

As a creative artist, meanwhile, he draws the greatest influence from the man in whose company he danced as a principal for more than a decade -- Paul Taylor, himself one of the revolutionaries of recent modern dance.

The story of the evolution of modern dance in this century has been, throughout, a story of revolution -- the revolution of the early barefoot dancers against the traditions of ballet, the evolution by Martha Graham of a seminal new form and technique of expressive movement theatre, the revolution of her descendants (Taylor among them) against the psychological-expressive and the mythic-theatrical in favour of pure movement.

It is within the broad sweep of this revolutionary modernist tradition that Grossman's work must be considered. However, as a choreographic artist, he belongs to no identifiable single school; rather he has evolved his own synthesis of technique and content that allows him the freedom to make the statements (as much social as individual) that continue to concern him.

The social concerns aren't difficult to spot -- the spoofing of empty patriot gesture in *National Spirit*, the threat to humanity posed by way in *Endangered Species*, the sombre religious penitents of *Ecce Homo* -- but his choreography also displays (echoes of Taylor) a well-developed sense of good-natured fun and witty frolic, an angular disjointedness, and an arresting physicality and sense of danger (*Higher*, for instance, with its punishing balances on and about a step-ladder; *Curious Schools of Theatrical Dancing*, an obsessive, tortured solo within a stylized circus ring).

Most important of all in new dance, though, is its ability to connect with its audiences -- and on that level, Grossman succeeds hugely. Perhaps because he was always a natural mover from childhood, there's something of the circus, of folk entertainment, of street movement, in his work -- a grassroots innocence that gives a direct, uncomplicated impact and accessibility to his dances.

He puts it this way: "To people who are not used to seeing dance, it's all new -- but I don't like the thought of people coming to the theatre nervous about what they're going to see. My concerns are personal and human, and the work I do is a mirror of all of us, what we've done and where we're going. The artist asks questions, because he really feels that we have to evolve as a species. What it boils down to then is a simple matter of wanting to communicate."

MAX WYMAN

What the critics say

On no account miss them. They are the tops.

London Evening Times

"O'Canada", how fresh, fiery and marvelously merry are your dancers! Grossman's troupe of nine drew tricks out of every bag, (including) two choreographies approaching genius, to the great delight of all.

Berliner Morgenpost, Berlin

Stunning. Mightily appreciated by the capacity audience.

New York Times

They seem to have everything -- a lively sensuality, a careful attention to style and form, an exuberant but controlled team of dancers, choreography full of wit and invention, and above all, a sense of fun.

The Guardian, London & Manchester



"Which way to the beach Dad?" The Danny Grossman boys indulge in a bit of "Magneto Dynamo" whatever that is.

The Danny Grossman Dance Company returns to Fredericton! It is performing at The Playhouse, University of New Brunswick, Monday, March 21 at 8:00 p.m. This Company is one of the most original modern dance companies in North America. The Danny Grossman Dance Company offers a repertoire of humour and accessibility, invention and wit.

Tickets for sale at The Box Office, Phone 455-3222
Price: Adults \$15, Seniors \$12, Students/Children \$5.

Danny Grossman's Dance Company brought down the house here with a show proving Canada's ability to compete with the world's best in modern dance. (It) showed a combination of technical expertise and aesthetic exploration rare today -- humanism and humor, politics with athleticism, and eroticism with slapstick.

Daily American, Rome

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