



Entertainment

Dancing to be EXTRA -- ordinary

interview by Elaine Ostry

"This year's DANCExtravaganza," claims Darold Roles, "will be the biggest and the best ever." Roles is the project coordinator of DANCExtravaganza '87, sponsored by Kompany Dance and Affiliated Artists Society and the University of Alberta Orchestis Dance Group.

This is the 6th annual DANCExtravaganza weekend. The event certainly has grown. The first time around, there were 80 participants, one evening performance, and five groups; last year, there were more than 300 participants, two evening performances, and 11 groups. DANCExtravaganza was originated by the artistic directors of Kompany: Roles, Schuster, and Vanessa Harris.

The event consists of dance workshops and performances. There are several guest artists who are invited to lead workshops and to perform. Cecilia Marta, from New York's Broadway Dance Centre, was a big hit at last year's event, and will be featured again this year. Roles claims that she is "one of New York's hottest dance teachers."

Morris Hines (yes, the brother of Gregory Hines) is also coming as a guest artist; he dances with BalleTap in New York. Another guest artist is Cassel Miles, a teacher of tap in Vancouver. He recently was the dance captain for *A Chorus Line* in Vancouver.

Although the event features guest artists from Vancouver and New York, DANCExtravaganza intends to focus on the dance community of Alberta. "The cream of the crop from Alberta will be there," says Roles. The purpose of DANCExtravaganza says Roles, is to "unite the dance community and to promote dance in Alberta, and to show the artistic and the general community that we have a strong dance community."

Participating groups include Decidedly Jazz of Calgary, the University of Alberta Orchestis group, the Alberta Ballet School, Kompany!, Mile-Zero, and students from Grant MacEwan's dance program. The dancing duo of Denise Clarke and Anne Ryan, who "received rave reviews from Calgary,"



photo Bruce Gandave

University of Alberta Orchestis Dance Group will soar on stage as well as several guest artists from Alberta, Vancouver, and New York.

will also be participating. Lambros Lambrou, the resident choreographer of the Alberta Ballet Company, is also teaching workshops this weekend.

The performances will include solos of Cecilia Marta and Cassel Miles, and dances from Orchestis. On Sunday afternoon, Kompany! will present excerpts from their dance revue "Duty Free — a Canadian Cultural Export," a simulated tour of Canada combin-

ing dances, comedy skits, and songs. Edmonton Musical Theatre and Kompany! will present a scene from the show *Cats*, which will include 12 singers and a band.

Although there are so many illustrious guest artists both performing and teaching in this weekend's DANCExtravaganza, Darold Roles stresses that the event is "geared to the general public... It's a chance for people to have a fun, informal setting to try dance."

There are workshops available for dancers of all levels, from beginners with no experience to professional dancers.

Roles states that another objective of DANCExtravaganza is to show "a little bit of everything", to present a "variety-filled weekend." There are workshops in ballet, jazz, tap, and musical theatre. It is possible to register beforehand or just before the actual workshop.

An historic occasion for The Phoenix Theatre

Phoenix' pink flamingo changes hands

interview by Elaine Ostry

On Tuesday, March 10th, Phoenix Theatre's Artistic Director Bob Baker handed over a (stuffed) pink flamingo, the symbol of the Phoenix, to his successor, Jim Guedo.

Jim Guedo, in his new office with walls bespattered with posters at previous Phoenix productions, is confident and excited about his new position. Guedo hails from Saskatchewan, where he was the founder and Artistic Director of The Actor's Lab, a Theatre in Saskatoon. There he directed such works as *Agnes of God* and *Extremities*. He was also the Assistant Director of Stratford's Young Company last summer.

The Phoenix Theatre, Guedo claims, is very similar in philosophy to the Actor's Lab. The mandate of the Phoenix, which Guedo supports wholeheartedly, is to produce contemporary, even controversial plays. "If my reaction to a play," says Guedo, "is 'hmmm, that was OK, let's go to dinner', then I know that play has failed... I want to be challenged, (to have) something to argue about." "Every play," adds Guedo, "has to say something and entertain."

Guedo believes that in every major centre, there is a need for a theatre who is willing to produce controversial plays, plays not considered for mainstream, big production theatres like the Citadel. "There are," says Guedo, "tons of plays that aren't seen that should be seen."

Guedo hastens to add that the Citadel has been instrumental in promoting theatre in Alberta, and he should know. Guedo has been coming to see plays in Edmonton regularly for the past ten years. At first, there was only the Citadel in Edmonton. Now there are

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several theatre companies in Edmonton, and 'the community supports theatre... or else all of those little theatres wouldn't be there.' "The Arts are supported much more here than in Saskatchewan... provincial and municipal support."

"Of course, the Fringe," says Guedo, "has done a lot for theatre awareness." The Fringe is viewed as a "melting pot" of a variety of theatre, and, to Guedo "Edmonton in summer is the Fringe."

Guedo acknowledges the work of his predecessor, Bob Baker: "People know what to expect from the Phoenix... Bob has carved its identity into the minds of the public." The Phoenix has a reputation for taking

chances, producing plays such as *As Is*, which was about AIDS. However, although Guedo approves of "topical" plays, he doesn't "plan to use theatre as a soapbox... the plays must be good theatre (to begin with)." The balance between discussion of social issues and theatrical form is, Guedo admits, a delicate one.

Where does Guedo look for his plays? He claims that in the West, it is "easy to get isolated, comfortable." Guedo sees as many plays as he can, even travelling to New York and London. Most of the plays he is considering for the next season have been major successes in big centres.

Some of the plays which Guedo is considering include Sam Shepard's *A Lie of The Mind* and *Danny and The Deep Blue Sea* by John Patrick Shanley. Another play up for

consideration is *The Road to Mecca*, by South Africa's best-known playwright Athol Fugard.

Guedo will be busy not only with selecting plays but with auditioning actors. He would like to concentrate on local talent. Although having a "core group" of actors is comfortable, Guedo would like to see different actors taking part as well, contributing their "new energy, new creative juices."

Theatre is fascinating, says Guedo, because "it changes every night." When you go to the theatre, "you're seeing history because that particular performance won't happen again."

It is apparent that Guedo has the energetic, creative attitude necessary for an Artistic Director, and it should be interesting to see how he will meet the challenges of this position in next year's season.

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