

# Repetitive show dulls party

By NICOLE DESJARDINS

This weekend it was Homecoming for York's Dance Department at the Winchester Street Theatre. Celebrating their 15th anniversary as well as the 25th Anniversary of York University, students, teachers, and alumni gathered together to present and observe the richness of our contemporary artists. The performance was comprised of 10 pieces illustrating the different paths each of the alumni have chosen.

"Imagine the hundreds of alumni not present here who have proceeded to careers or have moved into adjacent fields and beyond: dance writing, dance notation, dance therapy, dance teaching, other fine arts, administration, the humanities or the sciences," writes Keith Urban, chairman of the Dance Department, in the evening's program. It is true that the 11 alumni performing with 19 York dance students reflect but a small part of the 15-year-old York Dance Department. Each alumni contributed to the performance with either a choreographic work or a performance.

York dance alumna Monica George opened the evening with her mystical, powerful *Legacy*, music by Jean Michel Jarre. As a slow, increasingly intense red light fell upon the five dancers, they assumed positions in a countdown rhythm, wearing para-military suits and red stripes of make-up on their right cheeks. The dancers alternately took solo parts finishing in a military 'at ease' position as if watching a plane fly by overhead.

To the traditional music of Gamelon, alumna Andrea Smith performed a solo piece called *One Thousand Flowers* by Musa Tcheng. Smith glided with a low, earthy quality, hovering here and there, with palms flat and tough, fingers together. She kept the audience's attention throughout the piece, occasionally letting the music speak for itself as she remained immobile.

Then followed *Lionheart*, choreographed by Anna Blewchamp, which undertook the overused theme of an introvert's desperate longing for help. The piece was dedicated to Amnesty International. The contrast between the music (by Aaron Davis) and the restricted movements performed by alumnae Patricia Fraser and Edith Varga endowed the work with energy. The dancers seemed to be confined to a small area; travelling forward and back, embracing themselves with their arms. An altogether sympathetic performance.

*West Widow Waltz* and *The Last Walk* (choreographed respectively by alumnae Tedd Robinson and

Patricia Fraser) did not succeed in any great way. Both pieces embraced psychological themes. *West Widow Waltz* came across as a weak attempt at a Performance Art piece.

As for *The Last Walk*, the stage itself restricted the piece. York's Burton Auditorium's wings are much more suitable for the piece's numerous exits. It was performed very well there on October 8.

The second half of the evening met with a more enthusiastic response.



IT'S A BIRD! It's a plane! It's York alumna Patricia Fraser!

Dance alumna Carol Anderson (currently artistic director of Dancemakers) performed her *Allegro Mysterioso* with wit and energy, drawing laughter from the audience by combining lyrics such as "Be patient... Time will heal everything" with body movements that spoke of an opposite feeling. Conrad Alexandrowicz's black humor in his *Pumps'n Power* also added some light entertainment. Alexandrowicz wearing a pink satin dress, wandered around with two female dancers complaining about this "big blue world" of ours.

logue of dance. *The River* was a fitting piece to end the show. Tremendous imagery: the constant flowing waves, the water moving unrelentingly against the rocks left an impression of strength, and of continuing effort and progress in the York Dance Department.

Individually, the graduates' work has a lot of merit and much to say; but the over-abundance of performances in this case detracted from the appreciation that some individual pieces deserved. Still, better too much than too little.



Micha and Laura compare bulges during a cabaret performance in the Danish film *Ladies on the Rocks*.

## Clichéd film demands conflict for art's sake

By KEVIN PASQUINO

The theory that before an artist can achieve greatness s/he first must be miserable and self-destructive is a modern myth examined in *Ladies on the Rocks*, a Danish film opening November 15 at the Carleton Cinemas.

The film follows Micha and Laura, two part-time cabaret performers, as they travel across Denmark. Their show, an exploration into women's attitudes towards men, sexuality and physical beauty, is a social commentary that both entertains and disturbs. It is humorous but one also recognizes the common beliefs and biases it is satirizing. The problem with the film is that the cabaret is more interesting and original than the characters' lives.

Reality and fiction merge together for Micha and Laura, as their imaginative skits serve as a catharsis for their "real" misery. But after a short while, the women's actions and emotional behavior becomes suspect: it seems they must create conflicts in order to create their art, and one would not exist without the other.

Dealing with uncaring lovers and husbands that cannot accept independence, attempting to raise children while pursuing a life of one's own, facing the realities of one-night stands—these are all real-life problems in the film. But when problem is piled upon problem, the result is a string of clichés. Is it possible that two people's lives can be so unceasingly miserable?

At the end of the film, one is left with the feeling that the women and their self-destructive natures will never change. The conflicts that make up their lives must continue to exist since they seem necessary for their act/art. Because they seem to be unchanging and, more important, unwilling to change, Micha and Laura become stock characters and the film loses much of its appeal. While the cabaret acts within the film are excellent, the film as a whole is dissatisfying.

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