

Entertainment

Using dance as a visual concept

by Dean Bennett

The striking thing about the Anna Wyman Dance Theatre is not its choreography, but its "visual concept".

"It (the show) is very visual," said Artistic Director Anna Wyman. "I have lots of color on stage. I have props but they're not just standing around. I use them in the dance."

According to Wyman, though, the pictorial effects are only part of the reason for the group's success.

"The company has a tremendous sense of humor," she said. "People say this is wonderful because you can go out for an evening of dance but you can also laugh and enjoy

yourself. I think that it's important that when you go and see dance that it's not always serious."

Created in 1971 the Anna Wyman Dance Theatre has slowly climbed the ladder of success to become one of Canada's premiere modern dance groups. They have toured all over Europe, India, the United States and Mexico. Also, they were the first modern dance company to be invited to tour the People's Republic of China.

"We visited six different cities (in China) and had a wonderful time," said Wyman. "We were received well. I was teaching classes over there to the Chinese dancers. They asked me to show them the choreography and they would make notes by the dozen. Chinese dancers would come from miles around to see a rehearsal. I remember we had one rehearsal and a Chinese gentleman came up and said, 'Would you mind very much if the rehearsal was attended by some students?' I said 'Certainly not,' and the curtains were closed and we heard a lot of noise and I said, 'What is going on? and there were three thousand students sitting there. Can you imagine?'"

With their current tour winding down, Wyman now has a chance to reflect on a roadshow that was witness to standing ovations, and to near tragedy.

"We started off in Deerfield (Massachusetts) and had a wonderful performance and then we went to New York and we were ready, absolutely ready. Everybody was excited, it was our first New York debut, and the night before we opened one of my main dancers got run over by a bus. We were all devastated. With one dancer out in a group



The Anna Wyman Dancers: pictorial effects and a sense of humour, too often we had to change everything around. There were holes in the performance. It was a tremendous shock. It was devastating. He had a very bad concussion. He is still not alright. He can't remember things. His eyesight is very blurred. And, though we did a good show, it wasn't the show it should've been."

The tour rebounded in Quebec, playing to packed houses and standing ovations, but in Toronto misfortune struck again — their first bad review in 13 years.

"The company was low in Toronto the first two nights," said Wyman. "We had a very bad review. It was really hitting below the belt. I think it was uncalled for because the Anna Wyman Dance Theatre is not what this person said it was. But it's one person's opin-

ion and we got over it. The company is in top shape."

The Anna Wyman Dance Theatre performs this Saturday at 8 pm in the SUB Theatre.



Anna Wyman

Photo Tim Hellum

A Blockbuster Film

That Was Then...This Is Now
Paramount Pictures
Famous Players, West Mall 6

review by Gilbert Bouchard

The biggest thing the movie *That Was Then...This Is Now* has going for it is its sincerity. Not that it isn't a good movie in other respects, it is, just that it has to be one of the more honest movies made in a long time.

The film is the story of two boys, friends raised under the same roof since childhood who start to drift apart in their teen years. Emilio Estevez plays Mark Jennings, a low-class hell raiser and poolshark, who can't understand why his best pal Bryon (played by newcomer Craig Sheffer) is becoming so boring. Bryon, you see, wants to grow up and break the juvenile cycle of fights, poolhustling, and mindless hell raising that he and Mark seemed to be trapped in.

Bryon gets himself an honest job and even a steady girlfriend, while Mark grows more and more confused with his friend's change in behaviour. Finally the two grow so far apart that their friendship becomes impossible and Bryon is forced to toss Mark out on the street — where Mark promptly gets himself arrested.

As you can tell the plot itself is rather slim and a bit old, but because of the ace acting by the two, the whole movie works. You believe and care about Mark and Bryon because Emilio and Craig manage to somehow bring the characters to life and raise our sympathies. Personally, the strongest point of the movie is that the two actors were not afraid to simply let their emotions flow and sacrifice a bit of macho coolness for the sake of the story.

Emilio Estevez particularly manages to create his character so completely and realistically that he can shift from a tough rumble scene to a hell raising party scene to tender disbelief. Also, the screen chemistry between Emilio and Craig is something fierce, making their friendship all that much more believable and the alienation all that much more painful.

The only sore point I had about the film is that I think it's a bit less than faithful to the original novel by S.E. Hinton. Estevez, who also wrote the screenplay, lost a lot of the flavor to the novel by changing the setting

from Tulsa in the early 70's to Minneapolis in 1985. Some of the themes and concerns of Hinton's novel are completely lost to this adaptation, particularly Hinton's preoccupation with class struggle. Hinton saw a constant battle between the rich and the poor — a conflict underplayed in the movie.

But the few flaws aside, *That Was Then...This Is Now* is one truly good movie. It's a good honest story; adequate acting by all the actors and a clean artistic feel to the cinematography.

The movie tries hard and that's enough to take it out of the ranks of the mediocre and elevate it to a real blockbuster. Considering all the violent and cynical movies popping up on the screen it's really pleasant to see a nice honest movie about the friendship between two teenage boys.

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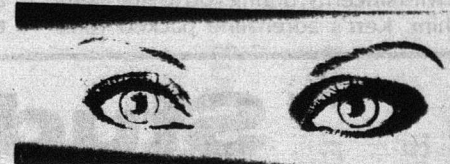
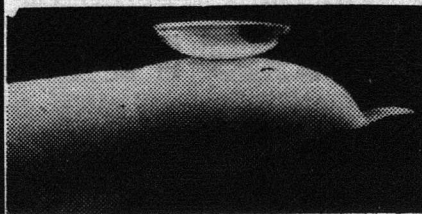
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