

Goblins dance at sunrise for TDT

By LISA HOPKINS

One of Canada's leading forces in modern dance, the Toronto Dance Theatre (TDT), will be presenting a mixed program of company favourites and new works at Premiere Dance Theatre January 20-25. The company will also feature premieres by resident choreographers David Earle and Christopher House.

Goblin Market, choreographed by House, was commissioned by the Department of Communications and the Expo '86 Dance in Canada Association. It is a charming piece that brings to life Christina Rossetti's enchanting poem of the same name. *Sunrise*, TDT co-founder David Earle's evocative new work, is set to the first movement of Brahms' First Symphony and boasts an impressive cast of 13 in what promises to be a powerful piece.

Graduating with a BFA from York University in 1979, House has acquired an impressive track record of excellence in choreography. A recipient of the Clifford E. Lee Award and the Chalmers Award for

outstanding Canadian choreographer, House was the first choreographer to receive a Dora Mavor Moore Award.

House has created 11 works for TDT and two out of five pieces on the current program are his. "I would like to be dancing more but one of the reasons why I'm not is that I have such a large amount of the repertoire," House said. Although it's hard to believe that he hadn't taken dance before university, he feels that the six or seven years that he has been dancing professionally are "nothing" and stresses the importance of dancing while you can. "I turn down a certain amount of work as a choreographer in order to be able to dance. That is very important to me," explained the talented performer.

The poem "Goblin Market," a fairy-tale about the mystery of eating goblin fruit, presented a unique choreographic challenge for House who had done very little narrative work. "The problem was to actually take a story and figure out if in 1986 there was a way or if there was even a point to do it so that it didn't look like a

19th century ballet or like Martha Graham with all those psychological symbols." House chose the poem because it had two very good roles for women (danced by Grace Miyagawa and Karen duPlessis), and because he was attracted to the unique gentleness expressed in Rossetti's poem. "The framework of the whole poem is very dreamy. I thought that I would like to respect her gentleness and not do something that would comment on the form at all," House said.

He does not consider himself to be a natural "Graham" dancer (The Martha Graham technique is the modern dance foundation of TDT employees). "I'm not by nature a Graham dancer at all; I'm not a heroic kind of performer." When asked how much of the Graham technique influenced his work, House replied, "A lot of my own quirks or vocabulary have come out of a conscious effort not to look like Graham. I would consciously go the wrong way, chose to distort it."

David Earle co-founded the TDT in 1968 and has since created more than 30 works for the company. He began his dance training at the late age of 19 at The National Ballet School and danced with the Jose Limon Dance Company in New York City where he also was a student at the Graham School.

With the onset of the U.S. involvement in the war in Vietnam, Earle was forced to leave New York earlier than anticipated because any male over 18 working on American soil was eligible for draft. Timing couldn't have been worse for Earle who had been preparing to tour with the Limon Company.

Earle said that at that time he still hadn't seen the Graham Company perform. He then made sure to see them. "I took my life in my hands and sort of wore a false nose and went across the border, watched 27 performances and then ran home."

Earle comes from a background of intensive theatre and spent 11 years with The Toronto Children's Players before beginning his dance training. He decided that he knew he wanted to dance when he saw The Bolshoi Ballet at Maple Leaf Gardens. For him, the transition from theatre to dance was easy. "I've always felt that there is an integrity in physical labour, and I had a feeling that act-



LIGHT ON THEIR FEET: TDT dancer/choreographer Christopher House with Karen duPlessis.

ing wouldn't give me that, I'd never felt totally used. I wanted to sweat." *Sunrise*, a new work by Earle is abstract and emotional with a strong sculptural element. He describes it as "a bittersweet quality . . . (like) the shedding of the skin with some regrets . . . (or) the sense of finding yourself alone but more clearly defined."

Earle considers himself romantic by nature and finds inspiration in the imagery of German romantic painters. Fascinated by the idea of man's confrontation with nature, he was particularly taken with Gericault's "Raft of the Medusa."

"When you're alone in front of the timeless expression of nature, you find a deep chord in yourself that really transcends the present." This is a central image that weaves throughout his work.

Earle was working on *Twelfth Night* when he heard the music for

Sunrise in a deli while grabbing lunch. "This symphony came along and I just thought, 'I'm going to chuck all my plans and go into the studio with this symphony and wrestle with it!'" This was a different way of working for him because he usually plans ahead. However, the music was too powerful and emotional for him to overlook: "I want to have a sense of tempest, a sense of shipwreck, crumbling forms and lost beauty that becomes found beauty."

Earle maintains that he differs from Graham because a sense of fairy-tale exists in everything he does. He admires her oriental contrasts and sense of theatre. "Unlike classical ballet where you polish the forms to show them, I believe the study of Graham is to set up a process within the body where movement emanates from the centre."

New works and old alike, this is a concert that shouldn't be missed!

YORK ARTS CALENDAR

Compiled By JENNIFER PARSONS

GALLERIES

Stumps, Knots and Suns, works by Wayne Emery. Founders Gallery (206 Founders College), January 19-30.

Photoworks, by Battaglia and McLaren. Calumet Gallery, January 19-30.

Area Shows, first in a series of student shows. Works by students in interdisciplinary studies. IDA Gallery (102 Fine Arts), January 19-23.

Collette Zaliberto, large acrylics on canvas. Zacks Gallery (109 Stong College), January 27 to February 12.

The Book of Seven Lagoons, an environmental piece from a travelling exhibition of the American Museum's Association. AGYU (N145 Ross), January 14 to February 22.

Anima Series, sculptures by Yvonne Singer. Winters Gallery, January 13-30.

MUSIC

Student Recital, Lily May Fabriga on piano. McLaughlin Hall, January 22, 7 p.m.

CJRT Soloist Series, the Canadian Piano Trio, Artists-in-Residence, will perform works by Rabinovitch and Schumann. McLaughlin Hall, January 28, 12:30 p.m.

Student Recital, Michelangelo Grieco, trumpet. McLaughlin Hall, January 29, 7 p.m.

Student Recital, Paul Filippo, violin and Stephen Harland, tenor. McLaughlin Hall, January 27, 3 p.m.

THEATRE

Soundstage, "The Ruffian on the Stairs", by Joe Orten, directed by Andrew Clark a second year student. Atkinson Theatre, January 23, 12:30 p.m.

Voices from the High School by Peter Dee and performed by the students of Elia Junior High School. At the Samuel Beckett Theatre, January 28-30 at 8:00 p.m. \$2.00 at the door.

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