

Features

Dance troupe makes waves



George Lomaga

Lydia Pawlenko

We find vision in places sometimes quite unexpected. The TIDE dance troupe engraves in one's mind images of day-to-day survival—images which inspire us or disturb us, but in any case, make us react, no matter how we envision the action of our daily lives.

It is perhaps by breaking away from Martha Graham and free movement that has set TIDE apart from most so-called "avant-garde" experimental dance groups. Their dance style incorporates everyday activities like walking, falling, squatting and sitting, set to musical collages of Tchaikovsky, changing radio stations, news, vomiting, poetry, and tennis balls being served.

York dance graduates Paul Ravitz and Denise Fujiwara, together with Allan Risdill, Susan McKenzie and Sara Shelton Mann, decided to "throw their hearts into dance" two years ago.

Their brainchild "Toronto Independent Dance Enterprises" has since emerged as a model structure for the organization and performance of dance troupes. "There was no use saving it for later," Ravitz said. "It's a finite career, and we're all aware of it. That's the reason we threw ourselves into it."

TIDE's dancing is closely syncopated with music composed by former York students Tina Pearson, Sam Shepherd, Miguel Frascioni and Marvin Green. The individuality of each dancer—physiques range from stocky and muscular to tall and lanky—is emphasized by the choreographer.

"The roles in our dances are not strict," explains Denise Fujiwara, a former Canadian Modern Rhythmic Gymnastics champion. "You might be performing with one attitude at one moment, then changing to a

different one the next moment. My identity is always me. In this type of dancing, you are just an extension of yourself."

TIDE is pushing the dance frontier a little further out. The group has an impressive list of past performances and reviews. However, as in any innovative arts which touch new grounds, the living isn't easy. It is still difficult to figure out what drives these dancers to engage in their creative activity with such a passionate intensity and disregard for pain and poverty.

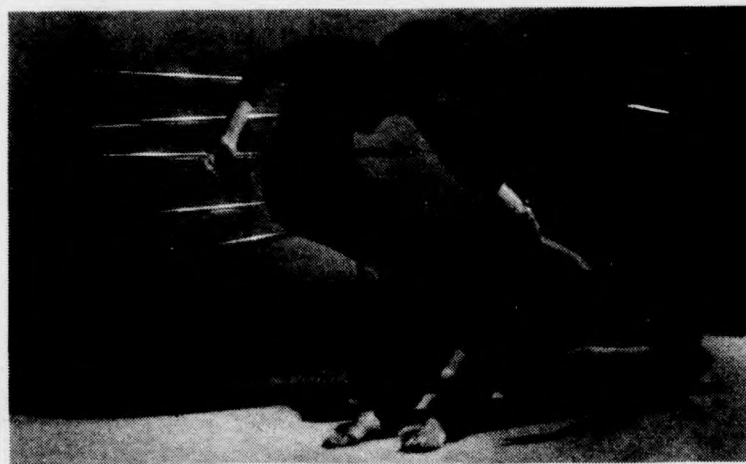
"It certainly isn't the money," says Paula Ravitz, TIDE's artistic coordinator. "If any artist has a commitment to their work, somehow they'll survive. If you're talented, fate will look after you."

For the past nine Sundays, Risdill, Ravitz and Fujiwara have turned in their leotards for aprons and served brunch at Maison d'Alsace on Yonge St.

below St. Clair, as a fund-raising exercise. Each dancer currently earns an average of \$75 a week from Ontario Arts Council grants and by holding dance workshops—barely enough to survive on, but enough to keep them practicing every day.

TIDE is now rehearsing full-

time for an upcoming show at Theatre Passe Muraille, which is giving over the 250-seat theatre to the troupe as part of their "support show" program. The performances run from September 2 to 13. TIDE will also be holding a dance workshop for all interested this Friday at 1:00 p.m. at Calumet College.



George Lomaga

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