

Students and faculty combine to put on 10-piece show

Dancers beat December blahs



By LOREN ARDUINI

At the height of exam fever last month, it was difficult to believe that a York event could rejuvenate the spirit and leave you feeling exhilarated.

Yet the December Dance Concert did just this, merging the creative talent of both students and faculty of York's Dance Department. The production consisted of 10 dance pieces, choreographed by faculty, students, and the two combined. It was the culmination of long hours of workshops and rehearsals that occupied the first term of the upper

level classes in the dance department. And it had a purpose.

The funds raised through donations taken at the door were used to create a badly needed costume department for dance performance.

The concert was given an informal flavour by using a member of the Dance Department as an announcer to introduce each dance piece and provide some information on it. However, programmes would also have proven helpful.

The production moved well from one piece to another, building to a crescendo by intermission. Each

piece was unique, with just the right touch of traditional movement. The opening piece colourfully moved around a complex story line. Yet more attention could have been paid to maintaining the unity of the dancers. As a result, the piece looked rather scattered.

However, the following dance number, "Engravings," compensated for the audience's initial disappointment. The romantic and graceful duet, beautifully executed by Michelle Farwell and Roderick Johnson, was well received by the audience.



The last piece before intermission was undoubtedly the highlight of the first half of the show. Appropriately titled "The Last Word," Gail Benn, the dancer and the choreographer of the piece, performed the number with technical expertise. As a faculty member, Benn's professionalism was expected. But the drama was well developed and emphasized by a simple black dress offset by Benn's auburn hair.

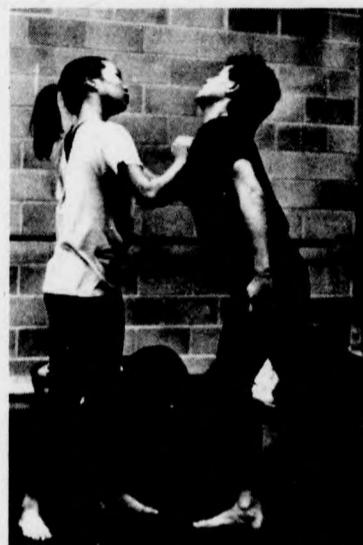
After intermissions the dance pieces were shorter and more experimental. The first piece, workshopped by teacher Gordon Phillips, had the dancers creating music with wood instruments and dancing to their own rhythms. Starting with a single rhythm, the music, as well as the dance, intensified with each added layer, then tapered off to a still silence.

Sparks began flying with the next piece, choreographed by Juan Antonio. "Imitation can be varied to create the impression of originality: movement is what dance is all about," Antonio said of the piece. What the audience then witnessed was a symphony of movement constantly changing to the upbeat music of Jean-Michel Jarre and Laurie Anderson. The colourful costumes added life to the varied mix of movement and kept the audience involved in the performance.

A sensual solo, "Lonely Woman's Tango," followed Antonio's piece

and slowly led up to the grand finale of the evening.

"Grasping Force," a powerful and exciting work by Kerri Weir, provided the perfect ending to top off the evening. It was vibrant and forcefully executed by all its dancers. Jean-Michel Jarre's "Oxygene" provided a pulsing beat so intense that it was also felt by the audience. The stimulating evening certainly ended the fall term on a high note.



REHEARSALS CAN BE VICIOUS but the work pays off, and the December Dance Concert showed York faculty and students at their best.

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Why Project OTZMA?

Project OTZMA was established with three goals in mind:

FIRST:

To bring talented Canadian students to Israel to help meet critical public service needs.

SECOND:

To give those students the chance to learn about Israel's history, its language and its future.

THIRD:

To encourage Canadian /Israeli understanding by having selected members of the Israeli Forum (a national leadership group) "adopt" Canadian students.

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