



By LOREN ARDUINI

The York Dance Department presented its most prestigious event to date at the Harbourfront's Premiere Dance Theatre last week. This was the first year such a dance concert was held in the new downtown theatre made especially for dance. The event was made possible through the efforts of Juan Antonio, the dance department's first Artist-in-Residence, and Keith Urban, its chairperson.

The concert, Spring Dance '87, was in keeping with what Juan Antonio describes as "the tradition of combining the efforts of the students, faculty, and alumnae of the department"; a tradition which began with the department's 25th Anniversary celebration last year. Antonio and Urban are hoping that such a large scale event will become an annual one if response is favourable.

The performance opened with an informal introduction by Urban describing the aims and aspirations of York's dance department. The evening's program consisted of nine dance pieces, four of which were previously performed for the December Dance Concert.

York's dancers head downtown

Although each piece was unique in its composition, all used modern dance techniques with a touch of the neo-classical in a few.

The evening began with *Grasping Force*, a colourful work choreographed by Kerri Weir, a fourth year dance student. The complex and fast-paced piece, performed earlier in the December Dance Concert, was powerfully executed by the eight dancers. The energy and intensity of the work was well-suited to the pulsating beat of Jean-Michel Jarre's "Oxygene."

It served as a worthy appetizer to tempt the audience with a taste of what was yet to come. However, due to the complicated and perfectionist nature of the piece, flaws in its execution became apparent. Many of the dancers repeated the same mistakes made at the December Dance Concert; they were not perfectly synchronized when required, and some of their formations were out of shape.

The next piece, *Tango d'Octobre*, was one of Antonio's own creations. This dramatic duet, which premiered in New York in 1984, featured two York alumnae, Janet Aronoff and Fanny Ghorayeb. Since Aronoff graduated in 1978, she has worked with Toronto Dance Theatre (TDT) and Dancemakers. Now, Aronoff freelances with ConfiDance, a modern dance company Antonio founded in 1984 in Toronto.

Ghorayeb has worked with Les Ballets Jazz in Montreal and the TDT since she graduated in 1981, and joined ConfiDance in 1984.

Both dancers showed an expert ability to perform the powerful piece with utmost control and style. It was undoubtedly one of the best technically performed pieces in the show.

Tango d'Octobre begins with one minute of silence while the two dancers move slowly and slyly around the stage. When the modern tango music by Astor Piazzola begins, the duet performs a sequence of mirror-like movements. Here the dancers amazed the audience with their unity and well-coordinated control. It was a piece which being both beautifully choreographed and performed, was a tough act to follow for those succeeding it.

Out of my Hands, choreographed by York alumna Susan Cash, spotlighted dancer Andrea Smith, also a York graduate. The piece incorporates moves which are flowing, graceful and delicate. And Smith maintained good control throughout it while still being very expressive.

Denise Duric, a fourth year dance student, choreographed the avant-garde piece which followed called *The Verge*. This complicated and unique piece substituted music with the chanting of a poem by the dancers. Wilford Watson's poem, "Edward Munch Paints the High Level Bridge," is the basis of this dance piece which used a dozen dancers, mostly from fourth year. Dramatic group formations and staccato moves with an intense social message produced a bizarre piece which was both thought-provoking and very interesting to watch.

The final piece of the first half of the concert was the highlight of the evening. *The Last Word*, choreographed and performed by faculty member Gail Benn, is an enchanting and dramatic number which was well received by the audience. Benn's years of experience as a dancer was displayed in her graceful and expressive moves, executed with technical expertise. Her control over even the slightest move was mesmerizing as was the lead up to her powerful ending.

The second half of the concert was shorter in length and was less impressive than the first. It opened with graduating student Lisa Hopkins' *Skid*. This light and upbeat modern piece was refreshing to watch after the serious, dramatic pieces of the first half. It had the dancers humourously leaping about in colourful costumes. The piece was well-matched by Gershwin music.

Engravings, choreographed by graduating student Michelle Farwell, was a touching and romantic duet performed by Farwell and Roderick Johnson. The piece featured soft, flowing moves which contrasted with *Skid's* humour.

Meridian, the piece which followed, was directed by Tama Sable (formerly of Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise (TIDE), created by Paula Ravitz (co-founder of TIDE), and performed by Carol Anderson (artistic director of Dancemakers). All are York graduates.

Although Anderson is capable of better dance execution, she chose to overdramatize the piece with unnecessary theatrics and self-expression. The piece lacked substance and did not live up to its potential. As a result, the number looked boring and amateurish.

The finale was reserved for Juan Antonio's *Imago*, a piece originally choreographed in 1977 for the now defunct Louis Falco Company, which Antonio co-founded. The piece, set to Brahms' piano sonata

Op. 34, blended traditional ballet moves with a modern twist. The piece was made visually appealing by the pastel coloured costumes which emphasized the delicate moves and by the use of many geometric group formations. *Imago* featured many scenarios happening at once on stage and this kept the audience involved in the performance. Even though the piece was enjoyable and charming, it suffered because of the lack of unity in the dancer's moves, and a weak ending which was surprising given Antonio's usually refined pieces. *Imago* left the audience somewhat short of the high expectations anticipated.

Such an event, if properly presented, can be immensely beneficial for exposing the talent the department breeds and promoting the best of what it has to offer to the artistic community of Toronto. It is ironic that this was exactly what was originally intended by Keith Urban and Juan Antonio, but somehow the performance failed to achieve this objective.

YORK ARTS CALENDAR

Compiled by JENNIFER PARSONS

GALLERIES

Janet Cardiff, recent prints by the artist. Glendon Gallery, Feb. 19 to March 29.

Pop/Op Multiplied, pop and op art selections from the Gallery's permanent collection. AGYU (N145 Ross), Feb. 26 to March 27.

Jean Cong, acrylics on canvas by the artist of birth and nascent life images. Zacks Gallery (109 Stong College), March 4 to 17.

Louise Levergneux, oil paintings and multimedia. La Maison Du Culture (Glendon Hall), March 11 to 27.

Tending the Fire, sculptures by Gail Esau. Winters Gallery (123 Winters College), March 16 to 29 with an opening on the 17th.

Photo Show, the Founders first year photography tutorial presents a show of their work. Founders Gallery (206 Founders College), March 18 to 22.

Area Show Series, this week displays works of the fine art drawing students. IDA Gallery (102 Fine Arts Bldg.), March 16 to 20.

MUSIC

Student Recital, Gloria Yip, piano. McLaughlin Hall, March 12 at 7 p.m.

Contemporary Ensemble Concert, directed by Prof. James McKay. Programme will include works by Stravinsky, Werbern and Schoenberg. McLaughlin Hall, March 13 at 12 noon.

Student Recitals, Susan Watt, piano; Rick Calich, trumpet. McLaughlin Hall, March 19 at 7 p.m.

Student Recitals, Paul Tam, piano; Malcolm MacLaurin, bassoon. McLaughlin Hall, March 17 at 3 p.m.

Student Concert, "Live and Electronic Music Music," a concert performed by students of the course in electric music. McLaughlin Hall, March 17 at 7 p.m.

Something Extra, a Juno nominated R & B band will be performing at the Bethune Dining Hall on Saturday, March 14 at 9 p.m.

THEATRE

The Insanity of Mary Girard, a play by L. Robertson and directed by Anne Driscoll. Samuel Beckett Theatre (Stong College), March 17 to 20. For more information phone 736-7326.

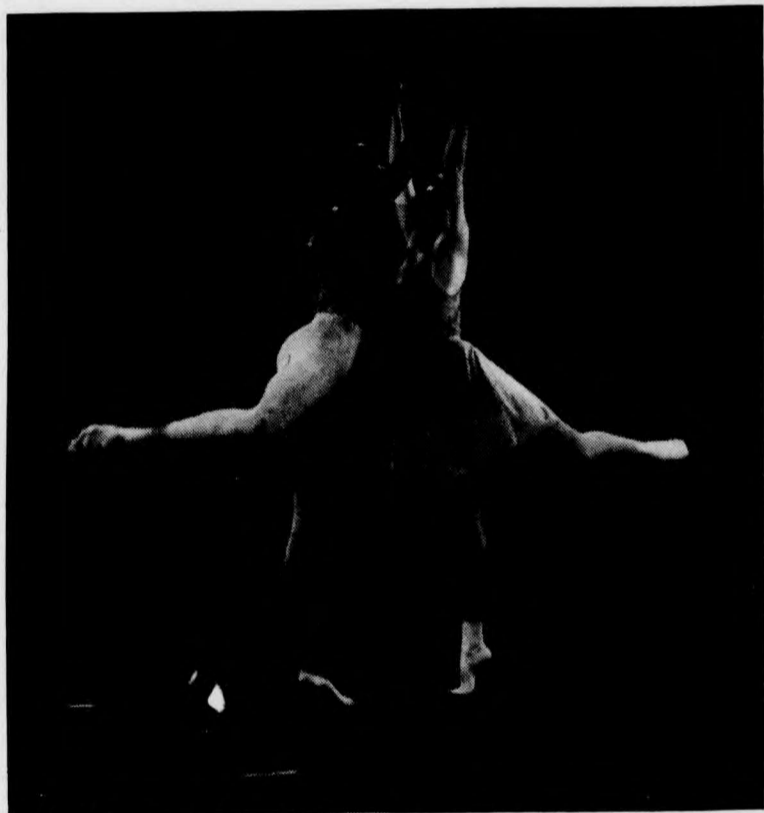
DANCE

Lunchtime Dance Series, Studio 1 (Fine Arts Bldg), March 12 at 12 p.m.

Dance Allegro, performs at the Winchester Theatre, 80 Winchester St. March 20 and 21, 8 p.m.

GUEST LECTURES

The Artist Run Gallery System, a one hour talk with Stephen Pozel, Executive Director of Mercer Union. Room 312 Fine Arts Building, March 13 at 12:00 noon.



REACH FOR THE TOP: Roderick Johnson and Michelle Farwell from the dance *Engravings*.

THE WIZ

presented by the Jane-Finch Players

March 12-14
8:00 p.m.

Oakdale Junior High School
315 Grandravine Drive

This Tony award-winning musical will reflect the 'multicultural heart' of the Jane-Finch Community, addressing such subjects as group cooperative work and the Canadian immigrant experience in searching for a sense of home.

TICKET PRICES:

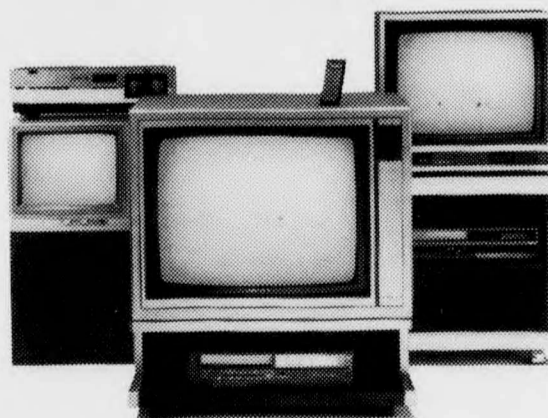
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