

Catch Jimmy
in 'Vertigo.'
See Inside.



THE Friday EDITION

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DANCE 85

Story by Lori Stephens Photograph by Michael Clapp



The stage is set. The instruments are finely tuned. The audience holds its breath as the lights dim. Robinson Theatre is about to come alive with music and drama, and this concert will invite the spirit as well as the senses into an experience of movement, color and flowing energy.

"Dance 85," the third offering of University Theatre's 1984-85 season, opens with vitality and sparkle Jan. 24. The production of six dance pieces is presented by Concert Dance Theater, the University Dance Department's repertory company.

Three University faculty members, a graduate student and a choreographer from Seattle have been organizing and writing original compositions for the program since last September. Through auditions, 24 skilled dancers were chosen. Though each of the pieces in the program exhibit different styles and moods, they have been artistically blended to form a unified production.

"Everyone was absolutely free to do whatever they wanted to do," says Robin Collen, University dance instructor and co-producer of "Dance 85." "It (the production) is a collaborative effort to offer a variety of dance styles," she says.

For her composition entitled "Mirage," Collen choreographed elements of Mexican folk dance within the context of modern dance and designed Spanish-styled costumes. Wearing full Jalisco skirts with wide ruffles, colorful sashes and Guatemalan belts, the six dancers in her piece will swirl and stomp to the music of Joaquin Rodrigo and Paco de Lucia. Development and coordination of the costumes was done by Carol Nagle.

Collen says that the slow, passionate duet in her piece, performed by Shigeko Sara Suga and Bob Ollar, illustrates the concept of opposite forces. "On one hand, it is a man and a woman. On another, it's this whole idea of two opposite sides of the same coin and how there's a real meshing with opposites," she says.

University dance professor Joellen Meglin-Roan's untitled piece integrates traditional African dance with American modern techniques. The music of pounding drums and singing, which was recorded in Africa, provides a background of complicated rhythms for the corps of dancers.

Meglin-Roan gathered many ideas for her piece during a recent trip to Africa. With a University faculty research award, she visited Mali, Senegal and the Ivory Coast to observe dance forms and movements. She watched ritualistic dances that occur during ceremonies and games and applied them to her piece.

University dance instructor Susan Zadoff, who has an extensive background in traditional ballet, steps off the beaten track in her composition, "In a Minor Cuneiform," which she choreographed to the music of J. S. Bach. It is non-narrative, non-literal and non-traditional, though it includes hints of classical styles. Zadoff's composition is spiced with surprises and wit, and "Dance 85" audiences are sure to be delighted by its mischievousness.

Upon the recommendation of the head of the dance department, University graduate student Tony Kramer created a modern character piece called "No Heaven" for this year's program. With the assistance of Bruno Madrid, the music director for the dance department, he produced a collage of music and sounds to accompany the choreography.

Kramer dances the role of the central character — a modern person coping with an unpredictable environment — and he says that the title and concept of the piece originated from a striking phrase he overheard in a conversation.

"The piece operates on a fine line between tragedy and comedy," he says.

His chic, professional costumes appropriately reflect the modern setting of "No Heaven," and by merging jazz and modern techniques, the dance expresses both a story and a mood.

Two weeks before the opening of "Dance 85," its producers added a sixth piece, and Caroline Shell, head of the dance department, elected to perform the modern work entitled "Lonely Women." Written by Laura Nyro and choreographed by Raymond Clay, the piece combines jazz with the emotionally rich style of the Martha Graham school.

"It's a blues number," Shell says, adding that she feels "it's the most serious in mood in the whole concert."

"Dance 85" guest choreographer, Lan Huei Hon, studied ballet and modern dance in Singapore, Europe and New York. She currently teaches at the Cornish Institute of Performing and Visual Arts in Seattle.

Hon choreographed a modern ballet entitled "Scriabin Dances" for the University production. Set to the music of Russian composer Alexander Scriabin, the piece combines graceful ballet movement with unusual modern forms. Collen and Ollar dance the poignant duet section.

The program will run Jan. 24-26, Jan. 31 and Feb. 1-2. Tickets are \$5 for the public, \$4 for senior citizens and students and \$3.25 for University students. For information and reservations, call the University Theatre box office at 686-4191.