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SPOTLIGHT

Indigenous ballet Dancing company performs with intensity and discipline

By Kathy Proffitt
Emerald Contributor

For the Senegalese, dance is a
way of life. Not only is it their
primary form of expression, but it
incorporates other art forms as
well, such as music, poetry,
theatre and religion.

Like many cultures, they have
dances to celebrate life, death,
weddings and baptisms. But it is
the sheer raw energy and passion
of their rhythmic movements that
makes the National Dance Com-
pany of Senegal both unique and
exciting to watch.

The company, which was found-
ed in 1959 by Maurice Senghor,
nephew of the republic's first
president, is made up of 40 musi-
cians and dancers who represent a
variety of African tribes. Company
members bring their diverse
cultural backgrounds and love of
dance together to celebrate and
share the African experience.

Displaying powerful rhythms
that vary in their use of the body
from head to hips to feet, the
dancers are known for their
remarkable discipline and incredi-
ble use of space in what has been
termed, "primitive ballet." Trained
from childhood, dancers move
effortlessly in huge sweeps of line
and color, while acrobats twist
themselves into amazing shapes.

It is this athletic ability along

with the seemingly "boneless"
quality of these dancers that makes
them so exciting to watch.

Many of the dances are fiercely
frenetic, ending in a stomping,
kicking explosion of energy.
Others are slow and sultry, sug-
gesting hot and lonely tropical
nights. And, as in traditional opera
or folk music, their dances all tell
stories of ancient rituals or
legends, portraying feelings of joy,
sorrow, evil or discovery.

The Senegalese culture is further
represented in the authentic color-
ful clothing and jewelry that is
worn in which both men and
women appear bare-breasted.
Though this may appear as a shock
to some, breasts are not a sex sym-
bol in Senegal as they are here, and
women often go topless for comfort.

In addition to rhythmic drum-
ming, musicians will accompany
dancers on the xylophone-like
"balafon," and the 21-string
"cora," an instrument similar to
the harp, made from a giant gourd.
The contagious beat of the African
drums creates a bridge between au-
dience members and dancers as all
become drawn into the joyous,
pounding rhythms. The softer,
melodic cora and balafon provide a
provocative contrast to the pound-
ing of the drums.

This incredible celebration of
life through the joy of dancing is



Courtesy Photo

**The National Dance Company of Senegal is scheduled to perform at
7 p.m. Sunday at the Hult Center.**

truly representative of the African
culture. The National Dance Com-
pany of Senegal will be celebrating
at the Hult Center at 7 p.m. Sun-
day. Tickets are \$7.50, \$10, \$13
and \$15, and can be purchased at
the Hult Center ticket office, or on
campus at the EMU main desk.

'Magdalena Flats' boasts good acting but little else

By David Bates
Emerald Contributor

There really isn't anything
special about Preston Jones' "A
Place On the Magdalena Flats." At
first glance it appears that Jones'
final play, which focuses on the
rivalry between two brothers, was
inspired by Sam Shepard's deligh-
tful treatment of sibling animosities
in "True West." Unfortunately, Jones
has watered down the script with
so many extras that the resulting
drama isn't nearly as poetic as it
should be.

The story is set on the
Magdalena Flats in

whose existence seems to re-
quire a place called the Busy
Bee Cafe, which is populated by
simpletons with names like
Booger, Wanda, and Patsy Jo —
all of whom would be very
much at home on an episode of
"Hee-Haw." The one bright
spot in this hodgepodge of two-
dimensional stereotypes is Allan
Kerschenbrock's Booger, an
aging cattleman who is trying to
round up support for a gubern-
atorial candidate who slipped him
\$10.

Don Nau, who is by now
familiar to patrons of VLT, is
satisfactory as the elder Grey
brother. Nau is at his best dur-
ing Carl's more reflective
moments. But the rest of the
time his performance is flat, and
robs the confrontation scenes of
power.

Bonnie Harris, who is major-
ing in theatre at the University,
is just fine as Carl's pregnant
wife, Wilson, in making his
debut appearance at VLT is
outstanding as the younger
brother, and often makes the au-
dience forget that everyone else
in the show is a stereotype, with
the possible exception of
Charlene.

Although there are times
when "A Place On the
Magdalena Flats" has all the
qualities of an embarrassing
melodrama, this simple tale of
two brothers locking horns will
be enough to satisfy most. But
even some good lines and
likable performances fail to
obscure the fact that the story is
much ado about nothing.

Review

southwestern New Mexico, a
barren land "dotted with occa-
sional ranch houses like ships
on a great brown sea." One of
these ranch houses is the home
of Carl and Charlene Grey (Don
Nau and Bonnie Harris).

"Magdalena Flats" is
Maurice Gauthier's debut as
director at Very Little Theatre,
and the result is a good job most
of the time. Sometimes it's very
good, thanks to Jones' excep-
tional performance as a teenager
in rebellion. At other times,
however, it is very silly, al-
though the blame is hard to
fix.

There are, for example, some
very silly characters in this play

Nicaraguan musical groups to play WOW Hall on Friday

By D. H. Holiman
Emerald Contributor

Two Nicaraguan musical acts,
Guardabarranco and Salvador
Bustos, are scheduled to per-
form at 9 p.m. Friday at the
WOW Hall. The concert is spon-
sored by the Committee in
Solidarity with the Central
American People.

Guardabarranco is a brother-

sister duo. Bustos is a solo per-
former. Jackson Browne is pro-
ducing the tour in the United
States and Canada.

According to Bonnie Souza,
the Eugene concert coordinator,
the concert is not overly
political, but does reflect
Browne's views that
"Nicaraguans should be mak-
ing their own decisions" and
"that the United States should
not be involved in war."



Courtesy Photo

**The brother-sister duo, Guardabarranco,
is one of the two groups featured in the
WOW Hall concert Friday.**

'Running Man' falls flat on its face

By D. H. Holiman
Emerald Contributor

"The Running Man" is about
Arnold Schwarzenegger
fighting for survival in a
futuristic game show in which
the contestants are chased by
homicidal maniacs.

Schwarzenegger, as we know
so well, is not your average
prey. Instead of being
slaughtered, he does the
slaughtering.

Since he is merely killing
killers his actions are supposed-
ly laudable. The only problem
is that he seems to take too
much pleasure in committing
acts of violence. As he dispat-
ches another foe, he utters lame

dience members are supposed
to simultaneously laugh and ad-
mire him.

"The Running Man" is not a
very good Schwarzenegger ac-
tion flick — which means it's
not just bad, it's very bad. The
direction, by that new auteur
Philip Michael Glaser, has little
style.

"The Running Man" has lit-
tle imagination but lots of
death. It's a film that one im-
agines would be required view-
ing in a real dystopia.

Review

★

witticisms through his thick
Tuetonic accent, and the au-

Oregon Mozart Players

Robert Hurwitz, Music Director

Sunday, November 22, 1987

Wagner: Siegfried Idyll
Mozart: "Haffner" Serenade in D, K. 250
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