

By Jack Clifford  
Oregon Daily Emerald

When Toni Pimble gave up dancing in 1986, the Eugene Ballet Company artistic director's mind said the time was right to quit, but the rest of her had second thoughts, so to speak.

"If you've been dancing since you were 8 years old, every single day, and then all of sudden, you switch off, your body misses it," Pimble said. "That was interesting to me, that your mind and your body really are closely associated in that respect."

So, with her ballet slippers tucked away, Pimble turned her full focus on the job she had been carrying out since 1978 anyway: choreographing dances for the company.

Some 40 works later, her mind is still going strong, and anyone who saw Pimble's vibrant premiere production of "Silk and Steel" in October at the Hult Center for the Performing Arts can verify her mental agility.

Pimble's next work, "The Nutcracker," comes to life at the Hult beginning Dec. 17. She toyed with the holiday classic two years ago, revised certain aspects, and like most of her other works, relied heavily on the dancers who carry out her ideas.

"I like to get in the studio with them and play with ideas because all kinds of things happen creatively because they are my medium and they add so much to what I'm creating," Pimble said, then laughed a bit. "Plus, if they say something I've choreo-

graphed is physically impossible, then I have listen to them."

Of course, Pimble can also draw on her own experiences as a dancer to determine if a certain piece will ache or not. Born in England, she studied at Elmhurst Ballet School and the Royal

Academy of Dance in London, before sprouting her wings and performing professionally with three German ballet companies.

During her time with the Kiel Stadttheatre Dance Company in the early '70s, Pimble became acquainted with a fellow dancer,

Riley Grannan. In 1978, the pair had an opportunity to buy a dance company in Eugene. Once the deal went through, the Eugene Ballet Company was born.

"The remarkable thing was when we came to Eugene, there was a large number of dancers

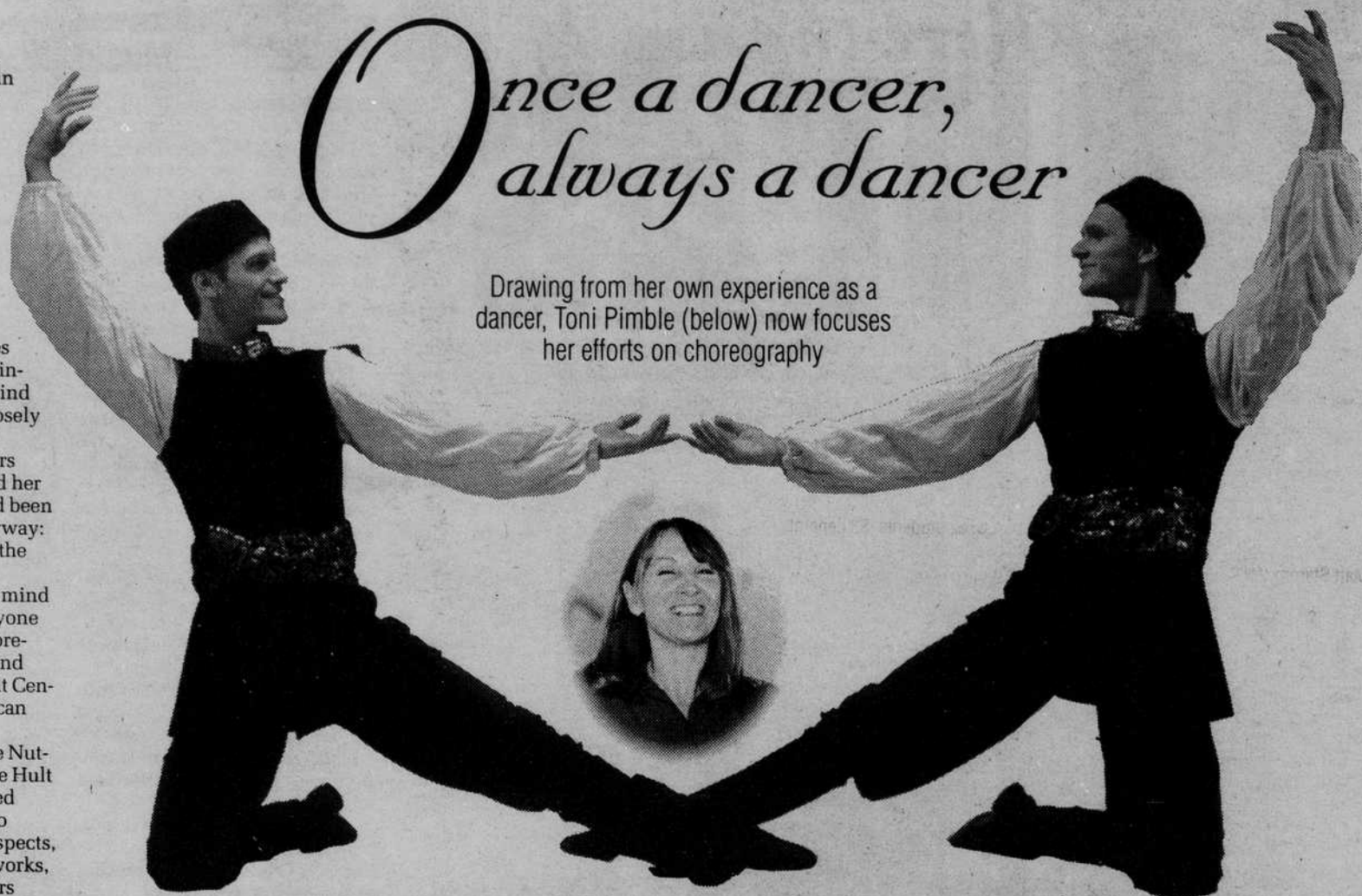
with professional experience," said Grannan, the current managing director for the EBC.

Thanks to strong support from the arts community, he said, the dancers' brainstorm flourished. In fact, throughout the years, the

Turn to **Pimble**, Page 7

# Once a dancer, always a dancer

Drawing from her own experience as a dancer, Toni Pimble (below) now focuses her efforts on choreography




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