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Dance interprets body's beauty

■ Performers explore issues surrounding the female body through choreography and costume

By Yael Menahem
Oregon Daily Emerald

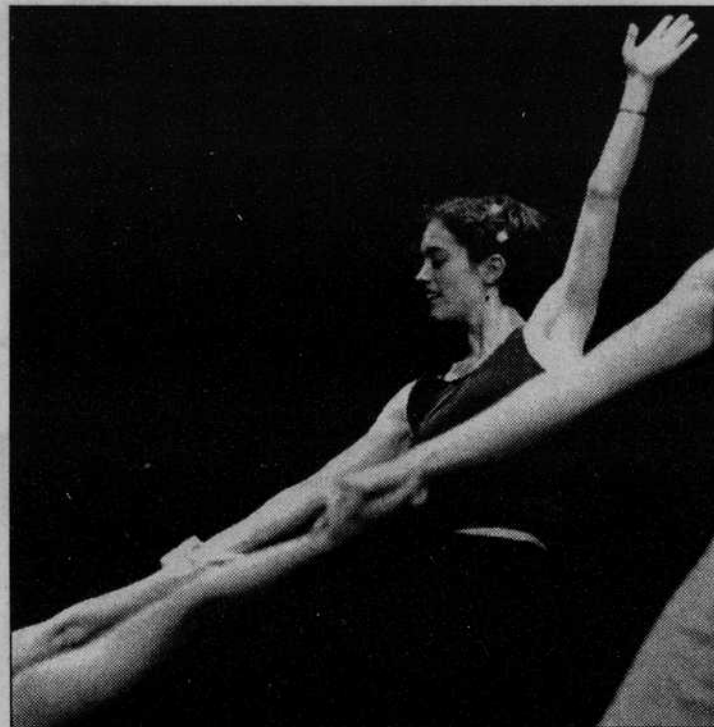
Women and their bodies. The topic can be a complicated one, but the VanUmmersen Dance Company interprets the movements of a woman's body in a full evening dance performance fittingly called "Body." The show is Friday at the Soreng Theater in the Hult Center.

This dance "addresses body issues and how one experiences living in their own body, feels in their own body and being public with your own body," said Pamela Geber, a University dance professor and performer in the show.

Margo VanUmmersen, the show's choreographer and contributing performer, brought this post-modern dance performance to life.

She received the McKenzie River Gathering Foundation's Lilla Jewel Award in recognition of the unique perspective women bring to the arts through this collection of dances.

The opening number is also



Catharine Kendall Emerald

Laura Nash rehearses for "Body," Friday's dance performance at the Hult Center.

called "Body," with the dancers in skimpy black outfits and showing the body as "a spectacle and body as a thing," VanUmmersen said.

"Each soloist draws from that to a really more sensual and interior essence," she added.

Geber described her solo dance, "Nipples," as abstract, not literal.

The performance encompasses "the ideas of luxuriousness, roundness, voluptuousness," she said.

For the piece, textile artist Marilyn Robert created a dress made out of organza silk fabric that bounces and adds another element to the piece.

"The dress is practically choreographed itself," VanUmmersen pointed out.

Another unusual number, titled "Plumb Lines," finds the dancers hanging from hammocks made from silk, also created by Robert. The dancers fly and swing through midair.

"That piece is very primal, sen-

suous and [has] sort of womb-like images," VanUmmersen said.

Another dance number, "Temple," takes an "abstract view of your body as your house, your temple and your place of worship," Geber explained.

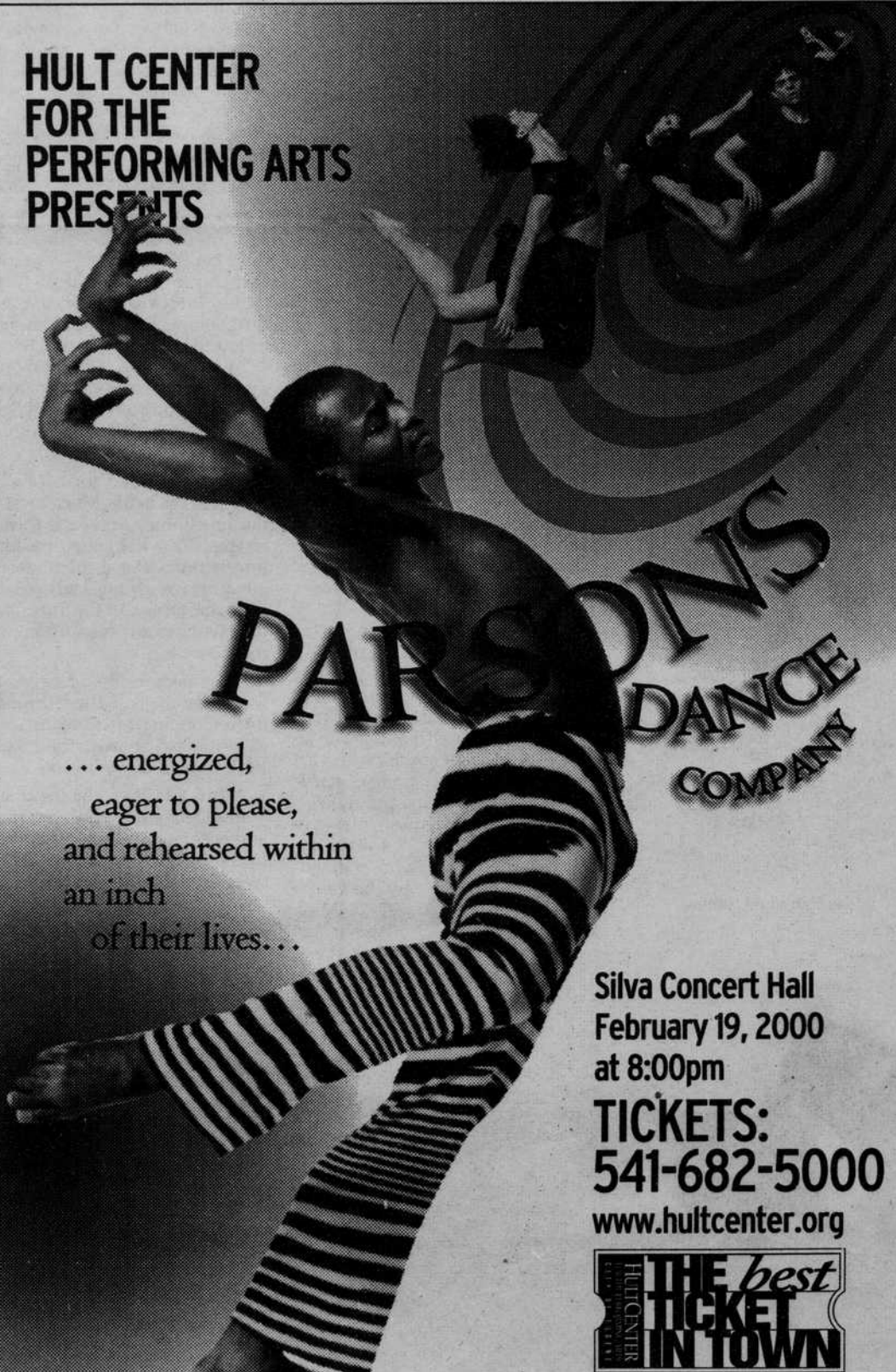
VanUmmersen said she choreographed Friday's performance pieces because she wanted to bring various dancers in the community together, and she is intrigued by the title's theme.

"I'm fascinated with the human body," VanUmmersen said. "As dancers and people, on one side, we find so much glory, promise and fulfillment from our bodies."

"On the other hand, so much conflicts surround body: shame, illness and sickness where bodies betray us. I was just fascinated by that contradiction and I wanted to explore that in a theatrical way."

"Body" begins at 7:30 p.m. Friday. Call the Hult Center, 682-5000, for tickets and information.

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