

## Keeping emotional company

*The Company We Keep, PSU's resident dance company, combine emotion, sound and movement in new work.*

BY KAMILA AL-NAJJAR

Creation out of emotion — the compelling need to express — some might even call it a healing process.

For two choreographers of Portland State University's dance company, The Company We Keep, personal emotion is expressed through their dance pieces for the company's upcoming show that will feature the works of four choreographers in the company.

Teri McCanna, a member of the company since it began in 1979, will be mixing dance and video in a collaboration with video artist Carolyn Altman.

## Dance

"The piece involves working with the idea of personal feelings of confinement and isolation and trying to portray a sense of tension that is created when you are in a closed environment," explains Teri. "This is the first time, for me, that an idea has come from such an emotional base."

The piece involves manipulation of TV screens and the dancers. Different images, including those of the dancers on stage will appear on the screens. One section of the piece is based on words, such as crowded, alone, heavy and emotion. With these and other words, the dance and video are put together to create a sensational effect.

The Company's newest member, Cindy Cummings, combines her emotions with dance and the manipulation of sound with Steve

Birkel. The piece will be in two parts, a solo featuring Cindy and a group piece with members of the company.

"The solo idea came from numerous train rides I took this past year in Europe and the United States. One day while riding on a train there was a boy dancing in front of me in the window and was completely in his own little world. I wanted to recreate the feeling of being in the middle of a long trip, completely in your own little world, not paying attention to what other people were thinking," describes Cindy.

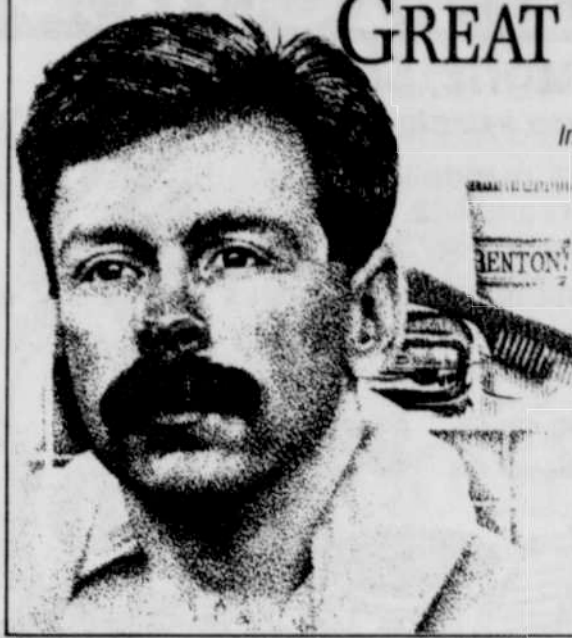
"The second part of the piece is about an emotional war inside of myself. It's about taking feelings and frustrations and burying them, and having them come out and reburying them, until you find yourself caught up in a cycle and can't bury them any longer — then you explode."

Throughout the whole piece immediate sound will be created by placing ultra-sensitive microphones around the room. The microphones will pick up the natural sounds of the performers and run them into a computer sampling machine. The computer sampling machine will have different live sounds computed within itself. When the original sound hits the computer, it will be processed and analyzed, and it will come back out for audience sounding nothing like it did going in.

"The possibilities are unlimited," says Cindy with a tone of excitement in her voice.

The performance will also include choreography by Tami Grey and Artistic Director Judy Patton. Other dance company members include Sue Brantly, Wendell Wetzell and Minh Tran. Performances are scheduled for November 13, 14, 19, 20 and 21 at 8 p.m. in Shattuck Hall Auditorium.

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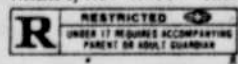
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