

arts shorts

Honka Honka!

Choreographer Rita Honka has never been afraid of crowds: She teaches the popular African dance classes for the UO, and her big personality stretches easily to accommodate the many students.

"I come from a family of 10 kids," she says.

This weekend, Honka will premiere a new work that is a lifetime in the making. "Honka House" reaches back to 1967, when her Finnish-American and German-American parents moved the family from Kentucky to downtown Detroit. They arrived just one day before the race riots. Honka recalls the chaos: "There was screaming, there was running, stealing, tanks in the street. But it's not that we were in mortal danger. It was about other issues."



Practicing "Honka House"

But the piece also slips into the territory of the familiar: Relationships, parents, siblings. Honka had asked her many siblings for stories about their family home back in 2005,

when she and the others returned to that place to help her aging parents transition out of their home. In "Honka House," Honka's sister Marie sings, and another sister, Didi, recites a poem she had written about their home.

"We painted, we cleaned, we moved my parents out, and I thought, I have to make a dance. I want to write a book, but for now, I'll make a dance," Honka says.

Honka's can-do spirit may be born of her heritage: "Michigan is a really Finnish state," she says. And her parents embraced her father Mike's culture with gusto, escaping regularly to The Finn Camp, a campground of sorts, with tiny wooden cabins, a swimming lake and of course, a sauna. In the dance, Honka's father offers a humorous preamble to the piece inspired by being a Finn.

Honka's company, Rita Honka Dance, relies on fundraising to create and perform new work, and she admits that she has incurred a lot of personal debt to produce this performance. So support local dance and a local choreographer with your presence at this event! "Honka House" runs at 8 pm Friday, June 1 & Saturday, June 2, in the Dougherty Dance Theatre, Gerlinger Annex, on the UO campus. Tix available at the door: \$10, \$5 stu., sr. — *Rachael Carnes*



DJ DV8

DJ Reflex

DJ Smuve

Remix Redux

Johann Sebastian Bach believed that it takes hard work and dedication to become a skilled musician. He once said, "I was obliged to be industrious. Whoever is equally industrious will succeed ... equally well." That commitment to music is what the judges at the 2007 Bach Remix will be looking for among their three contestants.

"Bach was a prolific composer," says Oregon Bach Festival Director of Communications George Evano. "He didn't care about fame. He played music for the pure love of it. We hope to see in our chosen winner someone who puts the music above their ego."

After the success of the first Bach Remix in 2006, the competition is back, and surprisingly, so are the same competitors. "It just worked out that the best three this year, in a unanimous decision, were the same three guys," Evans says.

The Bach Remix started as a creative outlet to introduce Bach to a younger generation. Each DJ is given seven minutes to mix the third movement of Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 with contemporary music the DJ chooses. The contestants will also be judged on creativity, showmanship and allegiance to the spirit of Bach.

The judges are Rocky Lamanna, a classical music announcer for KWAX-FM; Michael Kay, a DJ and a record producer; and Cindy Ingram, a music promoter. Evano lists three criteria for "the spirit of Bach": The music has to have strong rhythmic drive; the performance has to engage the crowd; and the DJ must show he understands Bach's music.

Last year's winner DJ DV8 (Danny Staton) mixed in a contemporary piece by DJ Shadow called "Organ Donor." Staton picked a piece that he felt demonstrated Bach's life. "I read that Bach had first been an organist before becoming a composer, and so I chose the 'Organ Donor' song to go along with that."

Runner up DJ Smuve (Bobby Green Jr.) enjoys classical music and is versed as a classical pianist. Last year he chose to use top 40 hits for his mix, but this year he said to expect all original music.

Returning competitor DJ Reflex (Sharif Lindel) plans on stepping up his game. "I was really busy with school and work last year," says Lindel. "This time I have more preparation time and more time to practice."

This year's competition will be held at noon Saturday, June 2, in the Heritage Courtyard of the Oakway Center. The contestants compete for a \$717 cash prize. In addition to the cash, the winner will be featured on one of the main stages at this year's Eugene Celebration, September 7-9. — *Deanna Uutela*

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