

Modern Marvels

Salt Lake City's Repertory Dance Theatre

If 22 of the most influential works of 20th century art toured the West Coast and stopped in humble little Eugene for one day, the whole town would be abuzz with anticipation. So if this were actually the case, and on Friday night you could go to the LCC Performance Hall and witness works of modern art that rarely see the light of day, you classy, arts-patronizing *EW* readers would clear your calendars. Right?

Well, then, best cancel your plans, because the LCC Dance Department, Sparkplug Dance and the UO Cultural Forum have fused their financial forces to bring Salt Lake City's prestigious Repertory Dance Theatre (RDT) here to perform "Time Capsule: 100 Years of Modern Dance."

From Isadora Duncan to Laura Dean, José Limón to Daniel Nagrin, "Time Capsule" puts the history of modern dance into context using narration and a multimedia slide show. This kinetic, musical and oral retrospective illuminates a still-new and exciting art form that is sometimes underrepresented in communities that otherwise support "the arts" as a whole.

But modern dance is not all serious social commentary, as modern dance matron Isadora Duncan's rebellion against ballet and brassieres might suggest. Charles Moulton's "9 Person Precision Ball Passing" is a playful piece that delivers what it promises, inspiring awe at the exactitude required to pull off such a feat without running into each other and toppling over like dominoes.

If you're a newcomer to modern dance, this performance is an excellent introduction to the form, since someone who knows little about the genre might be puzzled, even put off, by a regular modern dance performance without knowing the biography of the choreographer or the societal events that influenced the piece in question.

Otherwise, LCC Dance Department head

Bonnie Simoa says, "It's like going to a museum to see artwork, [but] you know nothing about the artist and you know nothing about the movement. If you know nothing and you're walking in blind, it's really hard to connect with the work." Consider conceptual artist Marcel Duchamps' urinal piece — if you saw it without knowing anything about conceptual art, you might be befuddled and even disgusted.

But RDT Artistic Director Linda C. Smith and Marcia B. Siegel wrote the script of "Time Capsule" to please a crowd of newbies and longtime enthusiasts alike. Most of the selected pieces rarely get taken out of the vault for live performance — making this one-night-only extravaganza a rare

opportunity for modern dance buffs and novices alike to witness rare choreographical gems. "Here I am, I have my master of fine arts degree in dance, I'm the head of a dance program and some of these pieces I've never seen," Simoa says. "Some of them I have, but a lot of them I haven't. I've never seen any of Helen Tamiris' work live."

The show is two years old, but the RDT has a history of performing similar historical medleys for this very reason. Shows like this, Simoa says, are rare. "There are very few repertory companies," Simoa says. "When a company can actually invest their dancers in understanding the technique well enough to be able to move through so many different styles, it's not an easy thing. And a lot of contemporary choreographers are interested in making their own work, not necessarily preserving the work of others."

In addition to "Time Capsule," the RDT will perform "D is For Dance," a modern dance, musical and poetic extravaganza for children. It will take place at 10 am Saturday, Oct. 27, in the LCC Performance Hall, as will "Time Capsule" at 7:30 pm Friday, Oct. 26. **ew**



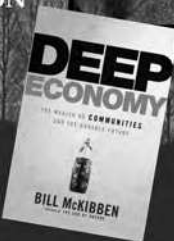
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