

Picasso, Hawking inspirations for new choreography

Wellspring, Cori Terry & Dancers "Annual Report 1999", Irving S Gilmore Multiform Theater at WMU. May 13-15 at 8 pm. May 16 at 2 pm. Tickets \$14, \$8 for students, free for children 5 and younger. Call 342-4354 for reservations.

By Jennifer Mesch
Special to the Gazette

"In The Wake of Picasso" is Cori Terry's newest choreography based on Picasso's 1918 painting, "Bathers". Artist Teresa Barnes is recreating the beach landscape of the painting in a large set for the piece. The tree figures that command the painting will be left out and the company members will breathe life into the figures and the painting three dimensionally.

"I have some kind of visceral response to the movement in the painting, especially in the in the top figure," says Terry. "The landscape of the water is very freeing for me." She adds, "Picasso is a very powerful artist for a lot of people. I am drawn to his emotional response to portraiture. He didn't create accurate representations. I try to do that with dance as well; an emotional reaction versus an actual depiction."

As a result, the choreography is not a fabricated story about the figures. Rather, Terry interprets some of the kinesthetic qualities in the painting and the free, uninhibited yet relaxed feeling one gets from being at the beach. "There are more layers to it than that, but that's the idea," says Terry.

Company member Michael Miller is also working on a new piece titled, "Measured by Moments" based on the book, "A Brief History of Time" by Stephen Hawking. "Initially, I wanted to do a piece about theories of time," Miller says. "Now, it's evolved into something else."

The title has evolved as well. Initially called "Singularity/Relativity", he changed it recently after opening a fortune cookie that read, "Time is not measured by clocks, it is measured by moments." "After reading that book, it affects everything I do," Miller says. "I can't separate myself from it."

The piece is an abstract piece, in which the dancers have no emotional connection to each other, and the movement occurs independently of the music. This abstract dance concept was explored and perfected by Merce Cunningham in the 1950's. "Michael's movement vocabulary is much different than Cunningham's though," says Terry.

Abstract dance is not something generally done by Wellspring. Cori Terry performed with Erik Hawkins' dance company in New York while Hawkins was still alive and well. Hawkins and Cunningham were both members of Martha Graham's company in the 1930's. Both broke from Graham and her aesthetic of drama and angst and created their own. Hawkins' dance philosophy was internal and subtly emotional, and his influence on

Terry is apparent in her own work. Cunningham made a clean break from drama and imposed emotion. Miller's piece does the same. Terry says, "Michael's dance is like looking under a microscope. It's like looking at cellular or molecular movement."

The company will also perform "Love Me, Love Me not" by guest choreographer Susan Van Pelt, who has choreographed for Wellspring before. "Susan's piece is based on Medieval courting rituals and utilizes 15th Century German music," explains Terry. "There is a lot of stylized, heavyhearted movement, and the dancers play different characters throughout, some comical, some serious."

The company will also perform a humorous piece currently untitled, as well as two previously performed pieces in their repertoire, "Before Time", and "Enjoranca". Each performance will be followed by a reception, and Saturday's performance will be followed by a question and answer session with the company.