Doors open for A Company of Dancers

By Caroline Leong

The Interim Performing Arts Center opens its doors this weekend for the fall performance of Creighton's A Company of Dancers. Performances will be Nov. 9-10 and 16-17 at 8 p.m., and Nov. 11 and 18 at 2:30 p.m.

The Company's program includes four pieces: "Espirrit," by choreographer Valerie Roche; "Runners/In For The Distance," by choreographer Farrell Dyde; "Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G," by choreographer Jill Lile; and "Coppelia Act II," staged by Roche based on Nicholas Sergeyev's staging for the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company.

Ballet, modern

Two ballet and two modern dance pieces will be performed to add diversity and balance to the program, Roche said.

"Espirrit" serves as a tribute to capture the style and spirit of work by Danish choreographer August Bournonville, Roche said.

To capture the spirit, Roche created her ballet using the same style and rhythmic qualities Bournonville used in his pieces, she said. "Espirrit" is typically the kind of thing he would have done, she said.

Roche created her piece by analyzing her ideas to Bournonville's style of dance, she said.

"I had some ideas in mind, but I examined those ideas to see if they were how Bournonville would have dealt with this piece of music," she said.

Children dance

To stay within Bournonville's style of choreography, nine children between the ages of nine and 13 will dance with the four company members. The children are members of the Omaha Academy of Ballet.

Selections of Danish romantic ballet music will accompany the dancers, Roche said. Composed by Gade and Paulli, the music includes "Et Folkesagn," and an excerpt from "Konservatoriet" respectively.

To enhance the "colorful mood" of "Espirrit," colorful lighting will be used with a sky drop on stage, said Tom Mazur, the Company's designer and technical director.

The dancers will wear "half-length, romantic tutus with character-style peasant bodices," similar to those worn by women in Bournonville's pieces, Roche said.

An associate professor of dance at Creighton, Roche founded the Omaha Ballet in 1965 and was the artistic director until 1974 when she joined the Creighton faculty. She is currently the director of the Omaha Academy of Ballet.

"Runners/In For The Distance," is a modern dance piece showing long distance runners not running for fitness but with a "sense of desperation trying to make contact with people," Dyde said.

The dance abstractly depicts post-nuclear survivors who experience the aftermath feelings of desperation and fatigue, he said.

Positive feeling

Through his piece, Dyde said he tries to convey a positive feeling to leave the audience with some sense of hope and strength.

"I Don't Remember Now," by John Bender is the music accompanying Dyde's piece.

Dyde is the artistic director of the Farrell Dyde Dance Theatre, a contemporary dance company in Houston, Texas.

To date, Dyde has choreographed over 50 pieces seen in Houston, New York and other parts of the country. He has received two choreography fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts.

"Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G" is both the title and music in Lile's modern dance piece. The "light, bubbly allegro" is a portion of composer J.S. Bach's Concerto, she said.

The dance features five "playful, mopey-like creatures" who show what it's like for some people to wake up in the morning, Lile said.

Morning risers

To characterize the morning risers, the dancers will become barefoot and wear loose fitting "jammy type" of costumes, Lile said.

Lile said she choreographed the piece after hearing the music. "Choreography has a way of taking on a life of its own," she said. "I let the music tell me everything to do."

Lile is currently a member of the Royal Academy of Dancing and an assistant professor of fine and performing arts.

"Coppelia Act II" is a "direct line" to the original Russian ballet version of "Coppelia," Roche said.

Void of walls and realistic structures, the sets are representative of Dr. Coppelia's workroom, Mazur said.

Using pantomime

The piece tells a story by using pantomime acting and dancing, Roche said. "The dancers' movements portray each character is like, she said.

The music, by Leo Delibes, was composed with the choreography and "exactly fits the pantomime," she said.

"A Company of Dancers" has been made possible with the support of the Nebraska Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

Tickets are $5 for the public and $3 for students, senior citizens and groups of ten or more. For more information, call 280-2117.