Guest choreographer opens rehearsals

By Caroline Leong

With the arrival of Creighton's guest choreographer Farrell Dyde, preparations for November's showing of "A Company of Dancers" are currently in progress. Visiting from Houston, Texas, Dyde was invited by dance professor Valerie Roche to choreograph one of four pieces for the dance performance. Roche, also the assistant director for "A Company of Dancers" said she chose Dyde because he's "considered to be one of the best young choreographers in the Houston area."

Since no guidelines were set for the type of modern dance choreography, Dyde said he was free to choreograph whatever he pleased. "I didn't come with any formal ideas," he said. "I just gave myself freedom to do what I wanted."

After assessing the skills and personalities of the people he'd work with, Dyde said he came up with the framework for his dance. Composed of eight females and two males, Dyde's piece consists of modern dance movements and steps. Jill Lile, dancer instructor and performer in Dyde's piece, described the choreography as a "strange mix of dance movements of everyday common gestures put in the realm of dance."

Lile said she likes the dance because it gives her the feeling of being able to throw her weight around. "It has a gutsy, flowing feeling like something I can sink my teeth into," she said.

Although currently untitled, Dyde said that his piece deals with long distance runners not running for fitness but with a "sense of desperation trying to make contact with people."

**Piece depicts survivors**

Dyde said that his piece abstractly depicts post-nuclear survivors who experience the aftermath feelings of desperation and fatigue.

Through his piece, Dyde said he tries to convey a positive feeling to leave the audience with some sense of hope and strength. "We're all in some sort of struggle trying to get from one day to the next," he said. He said he hopes the audience experiences a "classical, emotional release so they will go away with some sort of renewed energy in their life."

Dyde said his ideas come from a combination of events happening in his life and in the world. He compared his ideas to that of a balancing effect much like a "political situation which swings back and forth." He said the movements he creates are a "response to the world by not always trying to go with the flow of it."

Dyde used the same approach to choreograph Creighton's piece as with other pieces he's done before, he said. Starting with a basic movement, "abstract ideas take on a different shape when working with the dancers," he said.

**Strives for balance**

Dyde said he strives to find a balance between the conceptual framework and his own feelings to create his dance. Once the balance is found, he said he "uses it to manipulate them (the movements) in different ways."

Not knowing the performance level nor the dancer's personalities made the choreography a challenge for Dyde at first. "When you know the dancers, you can think for weeks about what they can do," he said. "New people can't always achieve the best results, but the goal is not necessarily the product but the energy in the piece and the impact it (the learning involved) has on the students."

When Dyde works with dancers he's familiar with and who've already established a sense of trust with him, it's easier for him to do other things and make mistakes. "If you're going to do something generally new, you have to stumble around at first," he said.

**Enjoys choreography best**

The audience, performances and the challenge encountered are aspects of choreography that Dyde says he finds enjoyable. With experience in painting, writing and acting, Dyde said that choreography is an art form he enjoys the most because of its combination of visual art, music, theater and dance.

Though he enjoys painting, Dyde said he doesn't have the patience to be a painter or novelist because those activities don't consume enough energy. "I wasn't terribly pleased (with painting), because I was throwing energy into something and wasn't quite getting the result," he said. "And besides, I felt I made better dances."

Although he doesn't have any negative feelings about being a choreographer, Dyde said that his overall health is one aspect he'd like to change. "Often when I finish a piece I'm not in good physical shape because I've not taken care of myself," he said.

Dyde leads dancers through rehearsal.

**Exercise routine**

To keep his body in good condition Dyde said he does an exercise routine as well as keep up with his bar exercises. In comparison to other people, Dyde said he may be healthy. "As a dancer or performer I'm not in as good shape as I should be," he said.

Although Dyde likes having performance deadlines, he said they sometimes come too early and don't allow him time to experiment with other ideas. The long hours of meeting deadlines result in "lots of stress and fatigue as with any job that requires one to achieve at a high level," he said.

Dyde said that he first became interested in choreography in high school after meeting a choreographer and taking an interest in what she did. "The whole world of dance was so exotic and foreign that I felt I wanted to be a part of it," he said. "At that point, there was not a lot of exposure to dance, like today where everything is so homogenized."

**Decision involved questioning**

He said his decision to become a dancer involved much inner questioning and defining on his part. "I had to overcome the resistance in my mind and my upbringing," he said. "It's still difficult today for men to dance because of peoples' stereotypes and what they perceive as masculine."

Dyde is the Artistic Director of the Farrell Dyde Dance Theatre. To date, he has choreographed over 40 works which have been performed in New York, North Carolina, Nebraska and Texas.

Dyde currently serves on the dance faculty at the University of Houston at Clear Lake City, Texas.