

ARTS ALIVE

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20 Years of
Nevada
DANCE
Theatre

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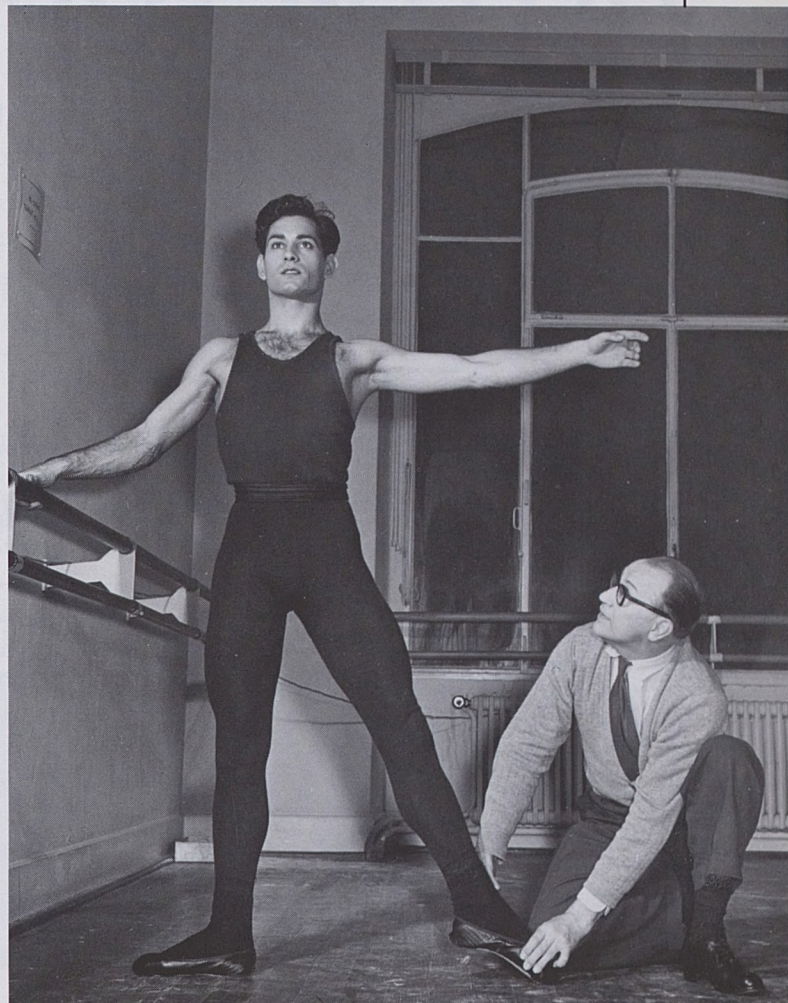
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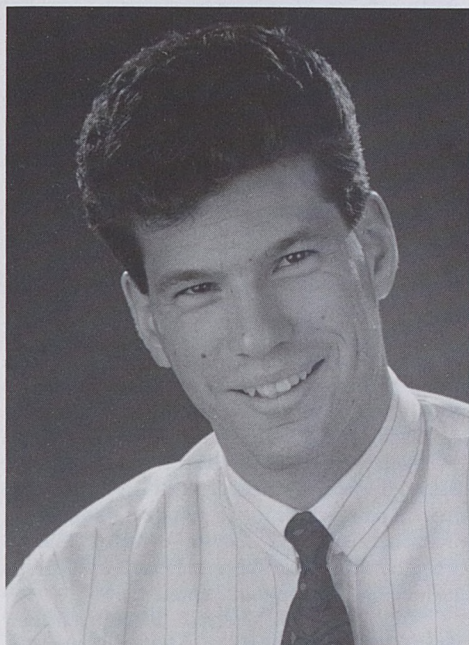
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THE CONTRIBUTORS



Aaron Mayes.

Fifth-generation Nevadan AARON MAYES puts forth his first Arts Alive effort this issue with a story on Valley High School's dance program. Mayes is admittedly culture-naive, but doesn't let that stop him from gaining new experiences. For example, the full-time UNLV student completed a story on balloon bungee jumping earlier this summer. Feeling obligated to experience bungee jumping first

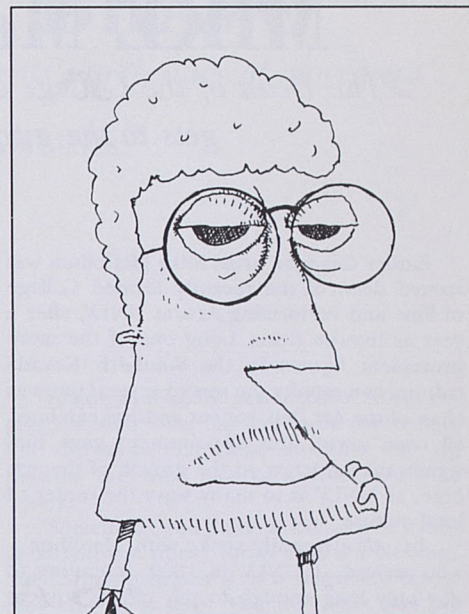
hand before writing about it, the Henderson Home News writer/photographer strapped a camera to his chest and took the plunge.

Writers' conferences are one of the fixtures of the literary life. Frequent contributor KAMY CUNNINGHAM actually ventured beyond the bounds of the Southern Nevada cultural community to attend a writers conference in California. When she returned, she called us. "I have a story you're going to love," she said. How could we say no?

First time contributor GREGORY QUINN penned the cover story on Nevada Dance Theatre. A refugee from L.A., he is an actor and UNLV student.

"None of the Above" columnist PATRICIA McCONNEL has received a boat load of awards and recognition: a pair of NEA literary fellowships, a Nevada State Council on the Arts writing fellowship, and much more. She is at work on a novel.

PEGGY A. ROEHLER has a B.A. in Dramatic Art, five years experience as a real estate paralegal, and really likes art. She now works at culture Dog Bookstore in Green Valley, and lives with her husband, *Arts Alive* contributor Jeffrey Portnoy, and a small annoying dog. You can hear Peggy discuss books with Muriel Stevens every Tuesday at noon on KDWN radio.



Scott Dickensheets (artist's rendering).

With this issue, SCOTT DICKENSHEETS assumes full editorship of *Arts Alive*, so address your complaints to him. His association with the magazine began years ago, "when I was foolish enough to write for free." That has changed, he says, but not much. Of his qualifications, he claims, "I like Art with a capital R." Among other things, he profiles painter Mary Warner in this issue.

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INTERVIEW

MIKE McCOLLUM

The Dean of the College of Fine And Performing Arts gets to the gwank of the matter

Earlier this year, artist Mike McCollum was named dean of the recently formed College of Fine and Performing Arts at UNLV, after a year as interim dean. Long one of the more prominent figures in the Southern Nevada cultural community (he served several times as chair of the Art Department and has exhibited all over town), this appointment gave him significant influence on the growth of the arts here, as UNLV is in many ways the center of local culture.

Arts Alive recently spoke with McCollum – who arrived at UNLV in 1969, intending to stay only long enough to pay off his student loans – about the college and where it's going, his move to ease resident cultural organizations off campus, and the effect of his new position on his art.

Q: What is the College of Fine and Performing Arts, and what does it do?

McCollum: When I came here in 1969, there were three departments within the College of Arts and Letters that had something to do with art, Visual Art, Music, and Drama. Dance had been around as long as any of us, but had been associated with the department of P.E. And it stayed that was up until 1986-1987. Those first three departments, they really were a college, a little teeny college. Paul Harris was the dean of that college. There was a total of about 15 faculty members, the university was about 3,500 students. Within about two years, it was decided, and I think rightly so, that we were so small we were getting lost in the shuffle, and they amalgamated us into the College of Arts and Letters, where we stayed for about 18 years.

Three years ago, I was Art Department chair, and the other three chairs (dance had moved in by that time) decided we were big enough to be considered our own entity. At that time we had about 50 full time faculty members, 40 part time, about 450 majors, and we were servicing about 1,500 students, and we had this building, so we had the space to do it.

This is our second year as a full time college. The main benefit is that before, we were basically three departments within the College of Arts and Letters, at each other's throats for whatever resources were thrown into that huge college, which at that time was 16 departments. We weren't pooling our resources and our talents.

To show how that's manifested itself, within two years we now have an interdisciplinary degree in musical theatre, that involves an equal number of units in dance, theatre, and music. That's kind of where we're going.

Q: What are your goals for the college in terms of both programs and facilities?

M: That's something I'm thinking about all the time. You have to break them down to short-term and long-term. Short-term, the most critical need we have is for undergraduate scholarships. That's it, that's flat-out where it's at. You can imagine how shocked and disheartened I was – not only because of their friendship, but because of their interest in our college – at the deaths of Tom Beame and Art Ham. Those were both people we were counting on for help in the scholarship area. So short-term, that's important.

Also short-term, there's some areas that need new degree programs or revamping of old degree programs to bring them up to speed with what's happening educationally right now. For instance, the Dance Department, their new chair, Lonny Gordon, he and I both agree that what's needed there is a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in dance, which is a professional degree program.

A more of a long-term goal has to do with the expansion of our graduate programs. Each department has a graduate program, and they're of two levels. The M.A., an academic degree, and the M.F.A., the professional degree. Dance has an M.A.; I see them going for an M.F.A. Theatre has both, and I see them broadening the M.F.A. program to maybe include the design areas. Acting possibly.

Another area down the line which I don't think – because of how fast we're growing – will ever be satiated, is space. We're getting 20,000 square feet of new space, but it's like a band-aid on a hemorrhaging wound. It's basically going to get theatre, dance, and music out of Grant Hall, and give the Art Department a chance to expand into Grant Hall. And that's just one step. We've already got this 20,000 square feet scheduled. Starting next fall, it's over-scheduled. We'll still have faculty in trailers.

Long-term, what we really need is some sort of 450 or 500 seat combination theatre-recital hall, that has associated with it a 10,000 square foot gallery, with rooms for curatology and storage of permanent collections. I'm hoping that within 10 years that will happen, and it needs to happen on-campus, not off-campus.

Q: What about this move to ease some of the resident cultural groups off the campus?

M: Right now the off-campus groups that are using space I have control over or that effect departments in our college are Nevada Dance Theatre, Nevada School of the Arts, the Symphony, and the Nevada Institute for Contemporary Art.

Our plan for the last three or four years has been to get something added to Alta Ham and reconstruct Grant Hall for the Art Department. So who is using that building [Grant Hall] now, in terms of off-campus users? The biggest is Nevada School of the Arts. They've been there a long time. They use the most space. Most of their space is taken up with practice rooms at the south end of Grant Hall.

I had lunch with John Smith [director of NSA] and explained to him what we needed to do. He and his board were working, long before I had lunch with John, on eventually moving the major part of their situation off-campus. It's not big enough for them.

Quite frankly, it's the press of space, the student press of space, people who are paying us to take our classes, that caused me to have that lunch with John. The timeline? Eighteen months. That still leaves 14 months, and we'd leave them two or three of those rooms so they'd still have a presence on our campus.

Next would be the Symphony. Not much problem with the Symphony. I think they've only got two of those rooms right now, so there's no need for me to go talk to them about that, because we'd like to remain affiliated with them, and the space they take up...there's no need to do anything about that.

NICA. It looks like NICA, if they had their druthers, would prefer to distance themselves from the university, and become their own entity. What's the timeline there? I don't know. They're going to have a full schedule of shows this coming year. What happens after this coming summer is still up in the air. NICA's still figuring out where they're at financially.

Q: But the impetus to move is coming from within that group and not from the university?

If at the end of the summer I didn't see some indication of them wanting to move off campus, then it would come from me. Probably. Realizing that if the Art Department made a strong case for NICA remaining where they are, I'd rethink my position. But it's my guess the Art Department would like to use the Donna Beam Gallery as a teaching tool [for curatology programs].

Nevada Dance Theatre. Suffice it to say that as dean of this college, I have absolutely no control over any space that they use. None. I don't know what else to say about that. If I did, I'd be trying to ease them out.

I have already turned down a request – to show consistency – from Nevada Opera Theatre. They wanted some space, some affiliation. Well, we just don't have that.

It's a space thing. That's it.

Q: How has this job affected you as an artist?

This job cuts down on the art. No doubt about it. On my career as an artist outside this state, it's cut that by two-thirds. Commitments I've made for shows in San Francisco, in Boston, I've had to cancel those. There is a frustration there that I can't get over.

But I have to make art, and I find that when I'm restricted, I really get to the gwank of the matter. It puts the focus on are you really motivated to do this or not. And I am.

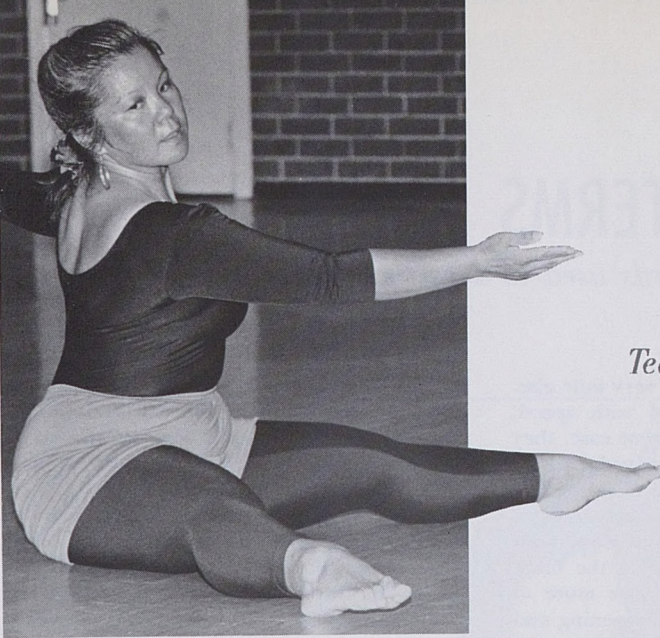
I see myself doing this job – assuming they want me to – for no more than five years, I think. Then my wife and I will move to the Pacific Northwest, and I'll put my full time back into art. I think I will have come full-circle in 1996 or so. aa

PEOPLE

DANCE BRAVO

Teaching high school students the 'beauty of movement'

by AARON MAYES



In 1980, Miranda Y. Ogawa started Dance Bravo at Valley High School, and after a decade of hard work, her program has grown to be one of the most successful and popular in the west.

"Every year at the Clark County School District Dance Festival, right before we go on, the audience is chanting, 'VALLEY, VALLEY,'" said Ogawa, who was the American Alliance of Health, Physical Education and Recreation's West District Dance Teacher of the Year for 1988-1989. "It is really crazy. The kids are just screaming for each other. They try to make it more like a concert rather than a festival, but they look forward to performing.

"Our dancers always look the best...the most organized, the most rehearsed, the most creative," she continued. "That is the only way I will allow them to perform in public. I won't let them embarrass themselves."

After starting out in San Francisco, Ogawa moved to Las Vegas when her husband took a position with the School District. She finished her degree at UNLV and joined the Valley High School staff 17 years ago as a physical education teacher. She also coached Valley's boys soccer team for a few seasons before Dance Bravo commanded her attention.

"My first years I had really good classes," she said. "The kids were so helpful. I was struggling along trying to determine how I wanted things to be done. Even to this day I still have some of those kids coming back to help me."

Valley graduate Lauri Gibbs comes back each year to help Ogawa with her classes. Gibbs helps teach jazz dance because Ogawa's forte is modern dance.

According to the instructor, picking students for her program is an important part of its success, because teaching modern dance to students can be challenging at first.

"I go around and look for good students," she said. "What I look for first is their attitudes and if they are willing to learn new things, because my strong point is in modern.

"With my 'Dance 1' kids, teaching modern is like pulling teeth, but by the time they get into 'Dance 2' they really enjoy the style."

In the past, Valley's students could take "Dance 1 - Survey of Dance" during their junior or senior years as an elective. This year, however, underclassmen will also be able to sign up for the no-requirements class. Unlike

"Dance 1", the second-year course requires Ogawa's permission to enter.

"The kids are introduced into the different types of dance, then they learn choreography, staging, and picking music," she said. "By the end of the first year they can deal with a program pretty confidently. By the second year they know where to go."

Dance is not the only advantage the students get from the program, Ogawa noted.

"The second year, when they come back, they start building a rapport," she explained. "They get real close, their friendships build, and everything just grows with them."

She pointed to a former student's recent wedding she attended as an example of the lifelong friendship built in the program. Three of the five bridesmaids were also her former dance students.

This year's Dance Bravo program will also have to contend with losing many of its students to the new Green Valley High School. Many Valley students are from the Green Valley area of Henderson and will be zoned for the new high school expected to open this year.

"At first I thought that the Green Valley High School opening would effect me in a negative way, meaning I wouldn't have as many kids," Ogawa said. "But I think that I am going to have a group of kids that will be okay. I am just about to start all over to see what we will have after the Green Valley kids leave, and then I will settle down and start recruiting.

"I have never catered to one socioeconomic group," she added. "My kids are from all over, because once they get into the program and get working, it doesn't matter."

According to the veteran dance instructor, no matter who she gets, her teaching style dictates that they all start from the beginning. She said that her program is set up to take the students who have no dance experience and move them into the performance mode.

"I tell the kids who are signing up for the class, 'No matter how advanced you are, we are starting from the beginning with me so you will know where I am coming from and how I want things done,'" she said. "Just because of my own style, I have to redo things, it might be something as simple as a hand position or how to turn a head. I find it easier to teach kids who have had nothing."

Ogawa admittedly gets excited when she gets a student who has had some instruction, but she adds that those students end up needing the same type of instruction as the others.

"Sometimes you have a kid who is really good and you think, 'Wow! This is a blessing,' but then sometimes it is a disguise because they end up saying, 'Oh, that's not how we do it.'"

Ogawa noted that her program works the year round on projects and performances, some of which include the School District's Festival, the Allied Arts-sponsored Choreographers Showcase, and Dance Bravo's Family Night, as well as many performances at local elementary, sixth-grade centers, and junior high schools. Besides the performances, Ogawa also takes her students to see a ballet every year, something she says not every teacher does.

Dance Bravo's Family Night was created out of a need for parents to see what their children were doing all those long nights in the school's dance room. Started in 1982, the program has grown enormously to now include a stage that takes up one-half of Valley's large gymnasium.

"Every year the classes add something to make the program a little different," she explained. "What is neat is that the students help me roll along with it, they grow with the program."

One of the program's highlights is the mass dance, choreographed by "a couple of Dance 2 kids." During the dance, the more than 100 students all participate in a modern dance to close the show.

Despite all the pressures of performances and programs, Ogawa's main goal is to teach the students that no matter where life takes them, being successful is not just being there.

"What I am trying to teach the kids is that you don't just move...you feel the movement," she said. "Get there...feel the music...feel the movement...feel the emotions and appreciate the movement.

"I really stress that the student feel the movement, whether it be up-tempo or sexy, you have to project it so the audience can see it. I would like the kids to appreciate the beauty of a movement, whether it be fast or slow...the shape...the space. I hope they appreciate how to get someplace, not just being there, but getting there." aa

REVIEW OF TERMS

Some explanations of those French words used to describe dance

Just in time for the 20th anniversary of Nevada Dance Theatre, Las Vegas SUN dance critic Hal de Becker offers a little clarification of some of the often-intimidating French verbiage generally used to discuss ballet.

I'm frequently asked what is described by the ballet terminology I use in my reviews for the *Las Vegas SUN*. This is certainly a valid question since the terminology is in French, which, even if translated, often fails to clearly portray the steps we actually see performed.

Since Vassili Sulich's Nevada Dance Theatre will begin its 20th season on October 24 (see cover story), this seems a good time to respond to these inquiries.

Fouette, for example, means whipped, but in ballet it refers to a series of turns, or pirouettes, sometimes as many as 32, executed on one toe and, hopefully, in one place. I have seen even very good dancers drift precariously close to the edge of the stage on an off night.

Fouettes are propelled and kept in motion by a whipping action of the free leg. Taken by themselves, they do not necessarily denote a skilled dancer. Classrooms often have students

who can do many fouettes, but very little else. Nevertheless, when performed with speed, precision, and, above all, apparent ease, they are an exciting and reliable crowd pleaser. Look for lots of them in NDT's *Nutcracker*.

Entrechat six is usually, but not always, executed from a straight-up jump off both feet with the front leg passing to the back, then again to the front, and once more to the back, all before landing. The opening and closing movement of the legs adds up to the "six."

They are often done in succession, occasionally as many as 32 (that magic number again). When executed with brilliance, this movement is reminiscent of a hummingbird hovering in space. NDT's *Giselle* will have many examples of this difficult step.

Another virtuoso step is the dangerous *Double tour en l'air*, again usually taken from a straight-up jump. The body, while sustained in the air, makes two complete revolutions before landing. I have seen a few dancers do three such turns, but only in class, never on stage.

Though many female dancers can execute

double tours, this step is usually reserved for the men. Frequently a solo will end with a double tour landing in a pose to one knee. You will see Albrecht, in his big second solo act in *Giselle*, doing many double tours.

Grand jete is a leap off one foot which, to be effective, must both rise in the air and cover space moving forward. It is usually preceded by smaller traveling steps which provide the preparation.

In your observation, try to capture this step at its apex, when the torso is vertical, the legs fully extended to a nearly horizontal position, and the feet strongly arched. The arms, if gracefully used, will complete the illusion of the dancer pausing in flight.

Line is the visual harmony of the dancer's body, produced through symmetry, grace, and technique. The challenge to the dancer is to maintain this sense of line, not just in stationary poses, but throughout all the dance movements, including the aerial.

Pages could be devoted to a discussion of the term *technique*. Briefly, it is a tool, a

See page 29.

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CONVERSATION

"A POWERFUL KIND OF SPACE TO BE IN"

Two artists move to the desert



They arrived in Las Vegas during one of the worst windstorms of the summer, which ripped the top from their rented 24-foot moving truck. "The power was out," Dennis recalls, "you couldn't see because of the dust, it started raining, and our artwork was in the back of the truck...." Welcome to Las Vegas.

Wondering about the adjustments involved in moving to a radically different environment, and how it affects an artist's sensibilities and work, *Arts Alive* talked to the Angels a couple months after they arrived. Dennis was readying a September exhibit in the Barrett Allied Arts Gallery, while Catherine was putting together a show for UNLV's Tam alumni center, also in September.

Dennis: It's going to be interesting having the show up. I'm really looking forward to that, to looking at the body of work and making some observations about what's happened since I've been here. Six were started in Wisconsin, but they were just barely laid in, not very far along. So being here has affected all of them, for sure. When I started the work, there was this issue of isolation, and the contrast between this secluded, intimate space, and a vast, kind of desolate space. And that really connects with the Nevada landscape, that's what it is. The name of the show is "Vigil Gardens," and a lot of the later paintings are garden situations, and I haven't seen any gardens since I've been here (*laughter*). But I think the gardens become Catherine and my space, whether it's the space we left behind in Wisconsin, or whether it's a metaphorical space we share spiritually. And that becomes

an intimate kind of protected space that we're in, in a new environment.

I think, too, the colors – and I don't know if it's something that would have happened anyway, just as I've changed as a painter – but the colors of the older work were much more muted. That might have something to do with the Midwestern light, it's a grey, overcast kind of place. And the colors since I've been here have become much more vibrant, rich. The other day Catherine brought home one of the smaller paintings, done since I've been here, to the house, and this large painting in the dining room is one of my older paintings, and it was like having a neon light next to the large painting.

Catherine: The colors look so much more intense.

Dennis: And I wonder if the Strip...I wonder if some of that bright, intense light –

Catherine: Well, you painted [the older piece] in Indiana, where it was grey 24 hours a day! I find it really interesting that the way you respond and the way I respond are so different. My pieces are much more...*dark*. I think that's a reaction to the move; it's a sort of traumatizedness, of feeling unsettled. I think that's how I respond to the move, where –

Dennis: I'm like, Wow! A new space!

Catherine: And it drives me crazy! (*Laughter*) He's so excited to be here. Who cares if the top of the truck blew off and we can't find a place to live, he's "I love it here! Isn't this great?" And I'm in the bedroom crying every morning.

But it's been two months, it's beginning to feel like home.

When I came here to interview, it was very familiar visually, because it's very much like Florida. It could almost be Florida except for the mountains.

I wonder about the idea of the Strip. How does that affect you over the years? I think photography at night down in that area would be really fantastic. There's a particular kind of energy there, it's frantic or something, that seems challenging. At some point I'm sure I'll try it, to see if I can do it, see what's there. See if I can figure it out.

Dennis: In my work, the effect of the landscape has been a little more obvious, a little more direct, in that most of my work incorporates landscape in a pretty believable, three-dimensional, spatial situation, so the desert, the open space, the lack of shade, has really played into the painting. A lot of the spaces have become desert landscapes, so that issue of isolation has become more blatant in the recent work.

Catherine: I think for me it's the idea of a change, and maybe not so specific. But

certainly I view the desert space as a spiritual space. The reason we made the change from Wisconsin to here was to have a better life, not financially, but a happier life. And so in that way I was real keyed into the desert space, and being here, so my work has a lot to do with this idea of attaining a higher level of spirituality...not in the sense of organized religion....

Arts Alive: Not organized religion, but the organic spirituality of the desert... "Organic spirituality"...I'd better write that down.

Dennis: Put down that I said that.

Catherine: (*Laughter*) No, I'm going to use it in my artist's statement.

Dennis: The organic spirituality of the desert.

Catherine: It's just there. We've hiked a lot in Red Rock and the Valley of Fire, and you walk for an hour in this space, and it's so huge and so basic. You walk in for a couple of hours and find a spring, and this small pool of water is just so fantastic.

Dennis: Also, too, as an artist, going out into the desolation and vastness of that space, it becomes apparent how insignificant we are in the grand scheme of things. It's just a very powerful kind of space to be in.

The light too is very different. It's clearer –

Catherine: I think it's harder.

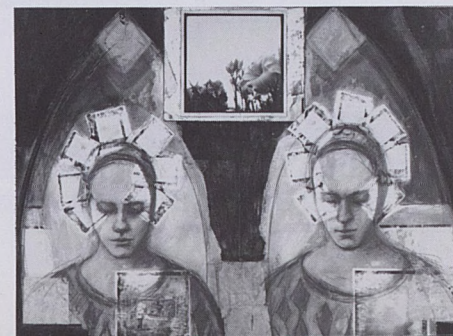
Dennis: Harsher.

Catherine: In a way.

Dennis: The light is more of a force here. I'm always aware of the light as a natural kind of phenomenon, like a harsh force, in a way I wasn't before. When I go out, I'm aware of the light, how it's hitting things.

Catherine: I think there is also a sense of freedom here. I'm not sure if it's because it's close to California, or it's the Southwest, or specifically because it's Las Vegas. But there's the idea that you can be who you are. There seems to be a real acceptance of whatever you are as long as you're not hurting anybody.

Dennis: My initial observation is that because Las Vegas is a 24-hour city, there aren't those sets of rules that exist in the Midwest. The art structure of the Midwest... there's a history of a particular kind of art that's done. I don't sense that here, I don't sense that there's those kinds of guidelines to play within as an artist. **aa**



“Tell me
thy company,
and I shall tell thee
what thou art.”

Miguel de Cervantes

Those who support the arts do so not only for themselves, but for the pleasure it brings others.

At the Vista Group, our recognition of individuals and organizations through awards to outstanding young artists at UNLV as well as service on numerous advisory boards affords us an intimate involvement with the arts.

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PEOPLE

TAKING OVER

Two newcomers and one very familiar face assume new positions

ROBIN GREENSPUN: NSCA

Robin Greenspun, owner of the Moira James Gallery in Green Valley and a ubiquitous presence on local non-profit arts boards, has been named chairperson of the Nevada State Council on the Arts.

"I definitely lucked out. I'm coming in at a time when the agency has more money than they've had in the history of the agency. It's a wonderful time, we have new programs starting - challenge grants and a rural arts program - plus more money in the general fund. So I have the advantage of probably looking better than I am, only because the agency has more money."

The NSCA's extra money comes thanks to an increase by the state legislature in the recent session. It will be used to develop a challenge grant program, \$50,000 a year split between applicants who can use the money for capital purchases and endowments. Money is also forthcoming from the National Endowment for the Arts for a program addressing the cultural needs of rural Nevada.

"I hope what I bring to the job is my experience with other boards in leadership roles. This is another step in what I have already been doing in the Southern Nevada community, though obviously much more state-wide." She has held board of trustee positions with the Allied Arts Council and Discovery Children's Museum, among others.

Greenspun said that she and the rest of the council will do their best to visit every part of the state, no matter how rural, how far, where the NSCA has funded organizations or projects. "We have to have an awareness of the rural areas. We are a rural state."

Greenspun's thoughts on the council's funding boost: "The arts really proved themselves in the last legislative session," she says. "I hope we can keep going in that direction. The fact that the legislature was so responsive to us is a good indication that we're making headway. The question is, can we keep it up, or will it level off? The one thing we can't do is let it slide backwards."

"Somewhere along the line something clicked with the legislature, that the arts can become a major industry for Nevada. It's not just something people do in their spare time; it's part of their lifestyle." The influx of new people into the state from areas of greater cultural sophistication is creating a demand for the same levels here, she said, also noting that businesses pondering a move to Nevada weigh available cultural amenities heavily when making their decision.

"I think the fact that we received funding through the tourism commission shows that the arts are considered a viable means of getting tourists to come here."

Still, she said, the arts are going to have to rally some powerful allies to maintain their

growth in a time when many states are cutting back on state arts programs, or are eliminating them entirely.

"The corporate world is going to have to help. They always have, but it's going to have to be more than just buying into our programs, they're going to have to help us with the legislature. They're going to have to be advocates."

JOHN JASINSKI: NICA



John J. Jasinski has replaced the outgoing Tom Holder as executive director of the Nevada Institute for Contemporary Art.

Jasinski boarded NICA as the influential visual arts organization began its sixth season. "We've had a good track record of national recognition for our exhibits, which has laid the groundwork for some serious corporate support."

His goals? To pump up the organization's corporate support, and to maintain NICA's reputation for quality exhibits. He's established a corporate membership drive and a new membership structure for donors above \$2,500. "I think it's a way for corporations - and let me emphasize that I'm talking about both large and small business here - to give something back to the community. It's also a way for businesses thinking about moving here to become involved."

In terms of exhibits, "I want to bring to Las Vegas shows you have to come to Las Vegas to see. Shows you can't see in New York, or Chicago, or Dallas, or L.A." How? "By constituting a unique vision of how contemporary art is presented, trying to reach a more diverse and broad constituency than has perhaps been reached in the past. That's the key, I think, to our growth."

"I have access to some very important corporate and private collections, whereby I think we can constitute some very handsome shows for the price of insurance, shipping, and crating. So I think we can achieve some significant cost benefits there."

Among his positions before coming to NICA, Jasinski spent a decade with Southland Corporation (owners of 7-11) in various

marketing and advertising positions, and, as the company's first-ever curator, founded Southland's corporate art collection (he also came up with the idea for 7-11's Big Gulp, a major pop culture icon). He has been a faculty member at State University of New York, at Utica-Rome, Hunter College, and others.

"I have spent half my life in academe and probably half of my life in business, so I'm familiar with the campus setting and the life of the university, but I'm also intimately familiar with what it takes to bring dollars to the bottom line. If that's the marriage of arts and business, then that's what I'm bringing to the altar, so to speak."

LONNY GORDON: UNLV DANCE DEPT.



"There is the opportunity here to build a dance program unique in the world," says Lonny Gordon, newly appointed chair of the Dance Arts Department at UNLV. Gordon, who has toured the world for more than 25 years, announced, "This year we are building toward offering Bachelor of fine Arts and Master of Fine Arts degrees in dance."

He added, "Las Vegas is unique in the sense of the entertainment industry, employing movement and dance. We can build unique degrees here in dance that utilize the resources and talent of the area. I was excited about the faculty and the depth of their experience, both professionally and academically. Very few dance programs other than New York or Los Angeles have the advantage of a professional entertainment world. This is a crucial factor in training for professional careers."

In addition to receiving three different Fulbright grants, Gordon has been awarded the Japan Foundation Professional Fellowship, a Mobile Foundation grant, and a National Endowment for the Arts grant. Prior to accepting the position at UNLV, Gordon was a tenured full professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he was graduate dance coordinator and dance program coordinator.

He has performed more than 80 commissions around the world, and has been noted in the pages of *The New York Times* and *Dance Magazine*. aa

Mark Masuoka Gallery

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STAN WELSH

Sculpture

SCOTT BELL

Paintings

November 15 – December 21, 1991

Opening reception for the artists: November 15, 5:00 – 8:00 pm

MUSIC

MOZARTFEST!

A celebration of the 200th anniversary of the composer's death

A week-long celebration of the last works composed by Wolfgang Mozart will begin November 29 and run through December 6 and the UNLV and various locations throughout the city. "Mozart's Last Thoughts," marking the 200th anniversary of the composer's death, will focus on his last works in the various genres he composed in. Six resident companies, the UNLV Music, Theatre, Dance, and Art departments, and various visiting artists will present concerts, films, exhibits, plays, and a ballet, all centering on Mozart's "last thoughts."

In addition, a two-day symposium will feature prominent scholars in art history, literature, medicine, musicology, and philosophy, who will discuss particular aspects

of Mozart's art and persona.

The festival opens with a performance of a musical theatre peice, *Mozart's Last Thoughts*, created especially for the celebration by UNLV faculty members Robert Brewer and Michael Mulder. The UNLV Theatre Department will present a production of *Amadeus* on December 4; the Nevada Opera Theatre will perform *the Magic Flute* on December 1; UNLV Dance Department will offer a reconstruction of the ballet *Les petits riens*, for which Mozart composed music, on December 1.

On December 5, the actual bicentennial date, the UNLV University Chorus will perform the *Requiem*.

Concerts, films, and lectures will be

presented throughout the seven days and evenings, and will feature the Las Vegas Symphony Orchestra, the Nevada Chamber Symphony, the Sierra Wind Quintet, the University Chorus, the Nevada Fine Arts Trio, the Musical Arts Society, and the Lysenko String Quartet with guest piano soloist Laura Spitzer.

Portions of the symposium as well as selected concerts will be simulcast on public radio and television.

For information on ticket prices and symposium fees, phone Isabelle Emerson at 739-3114, or Kelley Glitch at 739-3840, or the Performing Arts Center box office at 739-3801. aa

The following is as complete a list of Mozart activities as could be gathered at press time. Ticket prices and venues are subject to change, so call ahead of time. A single \$65 ticket will get you into all of the events except Nevada Opera Theatre's *The Magic Flute*.

Friday, November 29

- Opening Reception, Ham Hall lobby, 6 p.m.
- Mozart's Last Thoughts*, Brewer-Mulder, Ham Hall, 8 p.m.

Saturday, November 30

- Symposium, UNLV, 9 a.m., and Clark County Library, 1:30 p.m.
- Nevada Chamber Symphony, Clark County Library, 4:30 p.m. Free.
- Symposium Banquet, Ham Hall Green Room, 6:30 p.m.
- Sierra Wind Quintet, Ham Hall, 8:30 p.m. Free.

Sunday, December 1

- Symposium, Alexis Park hotel, 9 a.m.
- The Magic Flute*, Nevada Opera Theatre, Cashman Field Theatre, 2 p.m. \$35, \$20, \$15, \$9.
- Les petits riens*, UNLV Dance Dept., Ham Hall, 8:30 p.m. \$7.

Monday, December 2

- Film 1, Ham Hall, 2:30 p.m. \$5.
- Las Vegas Symphony Orchestra, Ham Hall, 8 p.m. \$10, \$14, \$17, \$20.

Tuesday, December 3

- Film 2, Ham Hall, 2:30 p.m. \$5.
- Lecture on String Quartets, Isabelle Emerson, Ham Hall, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, December 4

- Film 3, Ham Hall, 2:30 p.m. \$5.
- Musical Arts Society, Ham Hall, 7 p.m. Free.
- Amadeus*, UNLV Theatre Dept., Judy Bayley Theatre, 8 p.m. \$7.

Thursday, December 5

- Film 4, Ham Hall, 2:30 p.m. \$5.
- The Requiem*, University Chorus-Las Vegas Symphony, Ham Hall, 8 p.m. \$15, \$10.

Friday, December 6

- Mozart Lives! Part 1*, Nevada Fine Arts Trio, UNLV Black Box Theatre, noon. Free.
- Mozart Lives! Part 2*, Laura Spitzer and Lysenko Quartet, Ham Hall, 8 p.m. Free. aa

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SELECTED SHORTS

REPORT FROM THE NAA

Advocacy group sums up legislative successes

In a year when many states made severe cutbacks in arts spending, Nevada began to move out of the bottom ranks for the first time, according to the Nevada Alliance for the Arts. After being ranked 53rd in arts funding among the 56 states and territories for more than a decade, placing well behind Guam and the Northern Marianas, Nevada's ranking should rise to the mid-40s when the next round of statistics are compiled, predicts the statewide arts advocacy group.

"We have many, many people to thank for our success this year," said Alliance president Roger Peltyn. "There were literally hundreds of Nevadans who carried our message to Carson City, and then there were the budget officials, starting with Governor Miller and his budget director, Judy Matteuci, and Nick Horn, chairman of Senate Finance, and Matt Callister, chairman of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee. Most legislators this year understood the importance of the arts to both the quality of life and economy of Nevada. We must give special thanks to Senator Dina Titus, who formed the first Legislative Arts Caucus to work on cultural issues."

The main goal of the NAA since its founding in the mid-1970s has been increasing the budget of the Nevada State Council on the Arts, which administers National Endowment for the Arts grant monies for Nevada, as well as a sharply increasing amount of state funds. Small grants are given to individual artists and larger grants to organizations.

The Nevada legislature increased state funding for the NSCA by 52 percent over the last biennium, matching a corresponding 50 percent increase in funds from the NEA. State funding for the Council, \$729,000 during 1990-1991, will increase to \$1.1 million.

The total council budget, including federal, state, and private funds, will be \$2.43 million, up from \$1.58 million in the last biennium. This is the largest increase in the agency's history. Most of the new money will be used in the Council's regular grant program, and

to start a challenge grant program and a rural arts program.

In addition, the legislature passed AB590, which was originally recommended by the Interim Cultural Resources Study Committee in 1989. It creates a state commission to help preserve and promote Nevada's cultural resources. The commission will spend up to \$2 million annually for 10 years to preserve and rehabilitate historic structures statewide, and to fund arts and humanities programs to be held in those facilities.

Measures opposed by the Alliance failed this session, including one to levy an entertainment tax on non-profit events and another which would have declared the Mountain Man Ballet of Virginia City, a comic company featuring men dancing in boots and heavy work clothes, as the official state ballet. Instead, the company received a legislative commendation.

Angie Wallin, newly hired executive director of the NAA, had this to say: "Now we have public officials with real foresight, who know that a small amount of money spent on the arts and matched from private sources can have a very important effect on Nevada's national image, on our quality of life, and on our economy."

SHAKESPEARE WITH A TWIST

Rainbow Company takes on the Bard

"*MacBeth* is a great broadsword show," says the Rainbow Company's Joe Kucan, by way of explaining why they will present Shakespeare's dark masterpiece in December. "One of the things we offer our students is stage combat training, and this is a great way to showcase some of our students, not only in one on one combat, but in battle scenes."

"Quite a few people have raised their eyebrows about our upcoming production of *MacBeth*," says Rainbow artistic director Brian Strom, "but we have always been committed to presenting the widest possible range of shows for a young audience."

Rainbow promises a "non-traditional and experimental" staging of the play, although Kucan says it's difficult to say just what the play will be like, since many of the innovations will arise from the process of actually putting the show together. "We're interested in the process as much as the product," Kucan says. "We'll just have to see what happens." In general, though, he said the play will be set in the Persian Gulf, in a time before European history, "but with some very modern metaphors and imagery."

Isn't this a little heavy duty for Rainbow's young audience? Not really, says Kucan,

because that question arises from an erroneous notion of the company's audience as nothing but kids. "I think the people who believe that are probably people who haven't been to many of our shows." In fact, he says, they target many age groups. *MacBeth* is aimed at the older crowd, while the upcoming *Jack and the Beanstalk* will be targeted at four to 10 year olds. A non-traditional *Hansel and Gretel* will deal with child abuse, neglect, molestation. "It's very contemporary," Kucan says.

For a complete listing of the Rainbow Company's season, call 229-6553.

LAS VEGAS SYMPHONY

Mozart, "Messiah," ghouls highlight season

The Las Vegas Symphony opens its 12th season October 23; music director Virko Baley promises "the most expansive classical season" he's ever assembled. For instance, he's scheduled pieces that call for a larger-than-usual orchestra. "We're going to give the listener the acoustical jolt this music delivers by using a big-city band, a big-city orchestra," he says.

One highlight of the season, he says, will be a Mozart Bicentennial concert on December 2, marking the 200th anniversary of the composer's death. "I have generally shied away from one-composer concerts," Baley says, "but this will be both a challenge and a joy. It puts together three late works by Mozart, but so different. As a musician, one is challenged by that kind of concert, and to be able to make it happen."

Those who've been waiting for the orchestra to dress in ghoulish Halloween costumes will wait no longer: On October 30, the Las Vegas Symphony will perform a Halloween Pops concert, featuring Weber's *Phantom of the Opera*, and Herman's *Psycho: A Narrative for Orchestra*.

A more traditional demeanor will prevail at the orchestra's annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*, a joint concert with the Desert Chorale, on December 16.

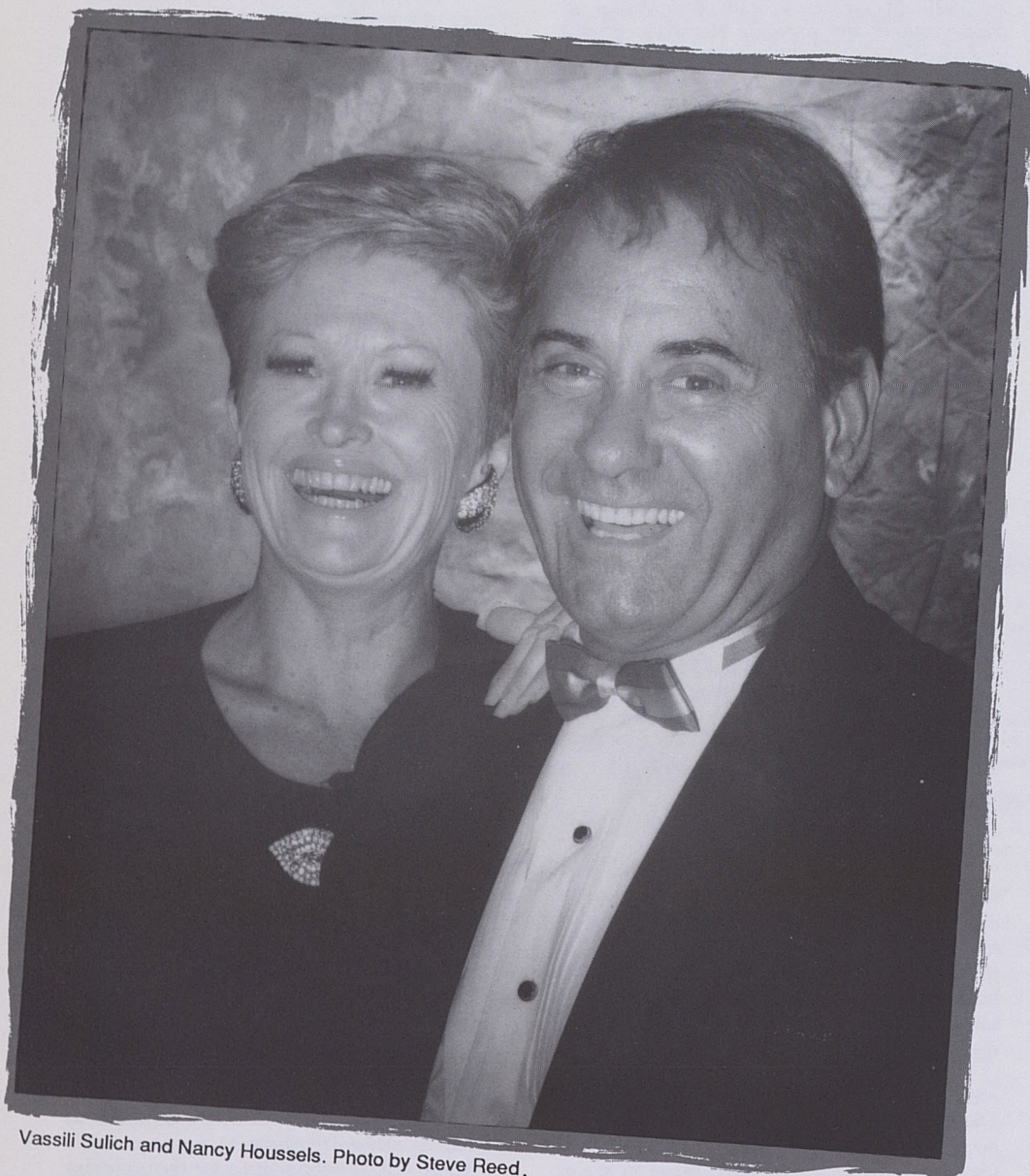
For more information on these or other Las Vegas Symphony performances, call 739-3420.

The Shifting Point

Nevada Dance Theatre

NOW & THEN

BY GREGORY QUINN



Vassili Sulich and Nancy Houssels. Photo by Steve Reed.

He is sitting directly across from me. His name is Drew. Drew with the two-tone hair and the UV tan, a way-cool L.A.-kinda guy. Earlier I had informed him and his two friends that I was writing about Nevada Dance Theatre, and since then, Drew has been grinning. Suddenly he leans forward. "So Vegas has a ballet," he quips. "Do they have a two-drink minimum?" Unable to resist, his friends join in: "Yeah, are we talking about nude ballet?" and "Do they have orangutans?" Stuff you'd expect from L.A. snobs. All is done in jest, yet I can't help sensing egg dripping down my face, as

if I'd taken the brunt of an ethnic joke. And like ethnic slurs, these remarks stem from a deep-seated ignorance, an ignorance of the culture now available in Las Vegas.

The leaders of Nevada Dance Theatre would like to set the record straight about local culture, and their message is simple: Las Vegas, City of Lost Wages, is no longer a cultural runt.

After two decades of ballet, NDT has seen its evolution and growth paralleled only by that of Las Vegas itself. Prior to this, their

20th anniversary season, I spoke with three principal figures of NDT about the progress of their company and the current state of the arts in Las Vegas.

Let's start with Vassili Sulich, artistic director and lifeblood of NDT. As a classical dancer, he had journeyed the labyrinth of European ballet, from Zagreb Opera Ballet to Ballet Ho, before joining *Lido de Paris* and later *Follies Bergere* on Broadway. The journey ended in Las Vegas, where *Follies* became an instant and long-running hit. But after nine years strutting his stuff on the floors of the Tropicana, he contracted a case of the ballet blues, signified by extreme artistic malaise: in short, he was bored to death.

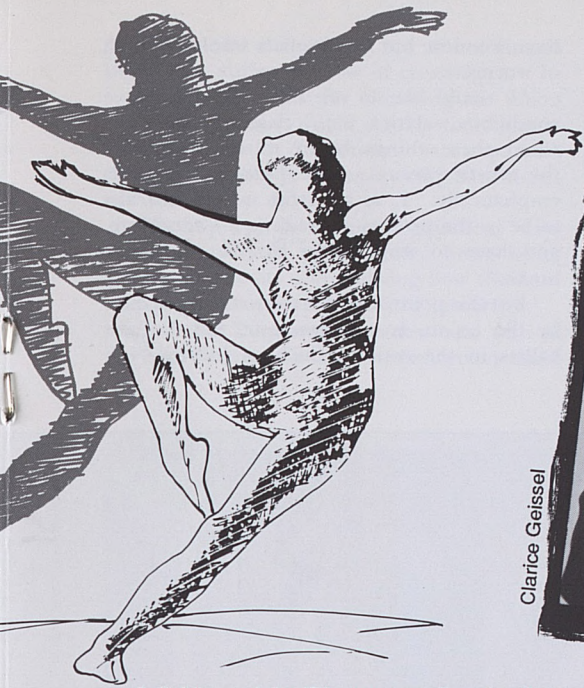
"After nine years, I needed something else," he says. "Show business was not completely satisfying, artistically speaking. I enjoyed doing it, but I felt I had enough and needed a change, and the change was a return to classical dance."

So NDT was born in September of '72 as an impromptu concert, organized and choreographed by Sulich, and offered to the public free of charge as a sort of cultural aperitif. Eighteen bored Strip dancers eager to stretch their imaginations gathered at the Judy Bayley Theatre for a program of three ballets. No sets, no pay, no publicity – just the dancers and their passion. And the crowd responded by filling the theatre to capacity, with many turned away. More concerts followed, admission was charged, classes were formed and the ball was rolling. At the time, no one believed Las Vegas was ready for a ballet.

Looking back, Sulich, now 62, tempers success with modesty. "I felt very lucky I was able to start something new here. In Europe I would just have continued a ballet tradition that has been going on for hundreds of years."

Norman Cain, NDT's long-time general manager, offers an appraisal. "Vassili Sulich, with his talent, would have succeeded wherever he went. We are very fortunate to have him."

Cain joined NDT in 1978, from New York City, and he remembers Las Vegas' anemic arts scene. "In '78, the cultural atmosphere was pretty sparse. We only had NDT, UNLV, the Vanda Masters Series, a couple of theatres, and that was it. It must have been even worse in '72 when Vassili started the company."



Clarice Geissel



Sulich's goal in '72 was to offer the free concert in hopes it would stimulate a taste for cultural events among Las Vegas. "A vision in the desert." Nineteen years and a million jetes later, NDT has grown into an institution: 25 paid dancers, 11 full-time staffers, a budget of over a million, and a list of corporate sponsors that reads like a Who's Who in Vegas. Golden Nugget, Caesars Palace, Summa Corporation – the heavyweights. All seem to give generously. How does NDT do it?

Cain, ever the businessman, is guarded about money matters, but notes: "Sponsorship is very appealing to corporations for making substantial donations. All our publicity for a particular ballet will say, 'sponsored by x y z corps.' Everyone is listed in our programs in the various categories."

Surely community awareness of corporate support for the arts is a major factor for big wigs dipping into their wallets. But why Nevada Dance?

In studying NDT, one name consistently floats through its past like a delicate pas de deux. It is Nancy Houssels. Former *Follies* dancer and current socialite supreme, she is the Pied Piper of NDT fund raising and, along with Sulich, has been with the troupe from the beginning.

Sulich turns pensive, his eyes aimed skyward searching for a fitting tribute. "If Michelangelo had Medici in Florence to guide him," he says reverently, "then I had Nancy Houssels here to guide me. Her greatest strength is her enthusiasm, which never collapses. I collapsed several times, she didn't."

"She's the one with a lot of connections," says Cain, "and she really spreads the word – in a manner of speaking, she puts the strong arm on them. Of course, she felt good about it because she knew there was a product, not something she'd be embarrassed by."

It also helps to be married to Kell Houssels, former owner of the Tropicana, especially when passing the hat. And amidst struggling dance troupes, NDT has not only survived but stayed comfortably in the black (the final numbers for last season indicate a 91.5 percent seating capacity).

Yet despite their relative success, fund raising, says management, is always a chore. Sulich revealed that the company goes from

season to season, always hedging on fund raisers, never financially stable. Remedying this ache would be a load off his mind. But like most artists, especially those from Europe, funding remains a thorn.

So how does Sulich deal with art versus commerce? "As an artist, I wish I didn't have to do business," he says tiredly. "It has damaged me as an artist in terms of energy and involvement."

He adds that things were handled differently in the old country. "I never had to do this (fund raising) in Europe. Someone else did it; in most cases it was the government."

Hear that, right wingers?

And it doesn't end there. Besides fund raising, Sulich is swamped with daily meetings, everything from staff to corporate to publicity – not to mention eight-hour daily rehearsals. It's a testament to how much the company has grown.

"Six or seven years ago we couldn't even get these corporations interested," says Sulich. "Now we have development meetings with a staff that never existed back then."

"It's turned into a business," says Clarice Geissel, NDT's principal and most veteran dancer (eight years). "As the company grows, it takes more people and becomes more of an organization – a big family business."

Being in the family eight years, Geissel could probably write the book on NDT. She leans back, crosses her sinewy legs, her lithe figure elegantly poised as she recounts her impressions. "Vassili is a charming, passionate man who definitely loves what he is doing."

Yes, but is he easy to work with? "He is mostly. But it's the same with any teacher; you have your good days and bad days."

Dancing has allowed Geissel a chance to tour the country and, along with Sulich and Cain, gauge new audiences' response to NDT.

"Most of the time we're very well received," says Geissel. "It's educating the people, which I think we've been doing, telling them our city has grown, that it's not the way it used to be."

Cain adds that NDT began touring nationally in 1983. "It's done a heck of a lot in spreading the word about Las Vegas, that we have culture." He relates an incident that sums up the Vegas image. "Last summer

at my niece's wedding, the preacher, when he heard I was from Vegas, came up and asked, 'So, what hotel do you work at?'"

But you wonder if Vegas's reputation is too overwhelming to change. Besides, shedding the myth of the cultural abyss has been going on for years. In trying to prove ourselves, are we developing a complex?

Sulich agrees that, "Las Vegas has an image established all over the world," but adds, "...it takes time, not to change that image, but to let people know we have other things."

As far as national recognition, there are no awards or trophies to boast of, but they have twice been written up in *Dance* magazine, the bible of dance literature. Writes William Como, "The Nevada Dance Theatre is a miracle.... There are many, many regional ballets in this country today, but only about 10 are of that stature." So there!

But who reads reviews anyway? What matters is how the community benefits from the arts, and that's a topic on which Sulich has a field day.

"I believe in what Oscar Wilde once said: In a beautiful society, people stand a chance to be beautiful. This may be idealistic, but I believe the problems of drugs, alcohol, etc., come from an emptiness. If children were exposed to the wonderful aspects of culture more often, then we stand a chance to be beautiful."



Norman Cain

He pauses to reflect, carefully choosing his words. He is concerned how this next statement will sound. "People give freely to charities such as half-way homes, drug centers, pregnancy clinics, but to prevent these things, people don't understand you have to start with *young* children, to show them the beauties of culture. This process is not so obvious. It takes longer.

"It's wonderful to see children reacting to ballet. These unspoiled souls. My greatest satisfaction is to see them after the show imitating the dancers."

As with Las Vegas, the optimum word for NDT has been growth, and with it inevitably comes change. Since 1972, NDT has been

housed at the university, with its offices at Ham Hall, its dance studio in the P.E. building, and its performance space the Judy Bayley Theatre. In the early days, Sulich remembers the Judy Bayley Theatre standing like a giant warehouse, empty and unused. Those days are long over as the theatre department, dance department, NDT, and others all scramble and fight for premium space.

It's a sure case of growing pains. All three principals in this interview offered a solution, one that would benefit not only Nevada Dance, but other local artists as well as the community at large: Las Vegas needs a performing arts complex.

For Geissel, it is her main criticism of Vegas. "When touring, even in small towns, I've seen some *incredible* theatres. I'd like to see the cultural leaders here pull together and build a theatre arts center where there'd be one theatre for symphonies, one for drama, and one for dance."

Why hasn't that happened yet? Geissel takes a long breath before answering. "Because we're all competing so much for what little we have that I think it's been forgotten. We're all striving for the same thing. If the arts people got together with these new corporations moving into the city, we would start to feel the possibilities."

Cain sees the move to a new venue as unavoidable. "We're very fortunate with our relationship with the university and access to JBT. It would be nice if we could have a longer season by adding a fifth performance series (NDT currently has four programs per season), but we probably wouldn't get theatre space. We need a performing arts center. I'd hate to think of us not having our home here, but with the growing pains we're experiencing it's quite possible."

It's only a dream, but imagine. All those disciplines – music, drama, dance – under one roof. The city's own cultural oasis. "A vision in the desert."

"I've been suggesting to certain people about building a cultural center," Sulich confides, "and naming after them for posterity, like Judy Bayley did. There must be another person in this community who can afford it, and who'd like to see his name associated with the community by doing this very beautiful gesture."

Hear that, casino kaisers?

Apart from their "dream house," NDT has taken concrete steps to fulfill Sulich's promise of more "quality." An associate artistic director, a ballet mistress – both of international standing – and a new dance academy director have been added to the staff, and plans are being made to lure more prominent guest choreographers. Way down the line, money pending, is the possibility of an international tour.

But no matter how many improvements are made in the infrastructure, the company would be nothing without the dancers, who in many ways are like worker bees: their lives are short, the risks are high, and the pay sucks. Yet they are the final product.

With all the talk of increased funding, additional programs, more staff, and new facilities, you wonder what the company has in store for the dancers. Salaries are kept secret from everyone, *everyone*, and a dancer doesn't know what the person stretching next to her

is making. The situation is ripe for rumors, and I'm told it's created its share of animosity.

Geissel fidgets in her chair, a touch of uncertainty in her voice as she speaks of the pay, a topic off-limits to strangers.

"They don't really let us know what's going on with how much people are paid. We don't have a flat scale for each level (principal, soloist, etc.). It's been changing from year to year, but," she says hopefully, "NDT is trying to work up to a flat scale for each level, and then go from there."

A way to implement a scale would be to

form a union, but this opens a whole new can of worms.

"I would like to see the unions improve conditions, salaries, etc.," claims Sulich, "but when these things begin to interfere with the artistic process...." He pauses, then adds emphatically: "I, as an artist, would not like to be in the process of creating a Grand Jete, and have to stop in the middle to take a break."

But this point, creative restrictions imposed by the union, is a hollow one, for the best ballets in the country, such as Joffrey, New



Vassili Sulich with Liliane Monteveche, Follies Bergere, Tropicana Hotel, 1964.

PERSONAL history

EDITOR'S NOTE: In this memoir, Nevada Dance Theatre artistic director Vassili Sulich recounts his life from Eastern Europe to Las Vegas.

by VASSILI SULICH

I.

The young child does not know what he or she will be later in life, but I remember that I have always danced. In fact, on one of my recent visits to my village on the Island of Brac, in Dalmatia, an old relative of mine told me that I never walked normally. Apparently, it looked like I always floated on half toe, down our cobblestone streets. Obviously not the image of a future quarterback! And that is true.

My childhood was a very happy one. I was always entertaining in somebody's courtyard or storage room. Once I did a show where we were all angels. I cut out wings of crepe paper. Children came in droves and everything went heavenly until the old wooden floor gave in and we finished on the wet, soft ground where

goats, sheep, and an old donkey were in residence.

Then came the travelling circus. They brought the magic. I kept thinking, *if only I could turn on the rope holding by my teeth or do the acrobatics the way they did....* After they left, I did try once to walk the tightrope. I fell and had to have six stitches in the back of my head. I decided to stay on the ground and dance. The first dance I learned from a Czechoslovakian girl was a czardas. I will never forget her eyes, filled with tears when she learned of the Nazi occupation of her country. Then the first plane flew over our village and we all came out and ran, following the plane. We were having fun, our parents were worried. We were at war! On Christmas Eve of 1943, we had to run away. Our village was burned to the ground by the Italian occupation. From Southern Italy, across the Mediterranean with big convoys of allied ships, we awakened under the burning sun on the Sinai peninsula.

There I joined a children's theatre. Christmas 1944 was a happy time. We were in an American troop camp near Cairo, where we performed and were shown the Disney film *Bambi*. My imagination was going a thousand miles per hour. After the war, big boats brought us back to Yugoslavia. The children's theatre continued to perform at home, and we went to Czechoslovakia. I remember the

York City, and Ballet West, are all union, and none have suffered a loss of creativity.

The main reason for shunning the union is money. A union would double the dancers' salaries, and with 25 dancers on the payroll, NDT would have to either lay off half of them, or die the next day.

"To improve the financial situation," says Sulich, "you need more money. From being in this community and knowing how the fund raising goes, we would be dead tomorrow."

Stil, after 20 years in business, and with all the heavy-hitters in their corner, you'd think

more improvements would have been made by now. And the phrases that dance through the air – in the black and 91 and a half percent capacity – it does raise some questions.

Cain adamantly asserts that no one is getting rich off NDT. He points out that the pay scale for NDT dancers is almost, almost, on a par with the national average, and just because they're in the black doesn't mean they have a million dollars in the bank. Still....

Despite the hardships, Geissel, a 15-year pro, but one who has had to take part-time jobs to support herself, remains hopeful. "I'll

give myself another six years," she says of her future. As for her eight years with NDT, she hasn't regretted a day. "I'll be here as long as they need me."

Nevada Dance Theatre is a gem in the desert, and by touring the nation they've become unofficial ambassadors of Las Vegas, exemplifying the best of our burgeoning culture. They have done this through dance. Let's hope the powers-that-be keep this in mind while wining and dining and schmoozing. Dancers got them this far and dancers will take them through the next 20 years. aa

thrill when we were performing with the Red Army Chorus and Dance Ensemble in Prague. We danced for Tito and president Benes, but then the group disbanded. I went back to school and very soon I had my own folk company. At one of the major competitions were the directors of the Zagreb Opera Ballet. They came backstage and asked me to join the ballet. The soccer team lost its goalie and I entered the world of dance.

At first I was put in *Aida*. I remember it – because I fell. The director was in a box next to the stage and his expression was devastating. But I was not fired. I did character roles in *Coppelia*, *Scheherazade*, and *Capriccio Espanole*, etc. An American dancer, Juanna, came to Zagreb to perform. She was the first dancer to visit Yugoslavia after the war. We became friends. She helped me go out into the world. I had no money, spoke no English, and to obtain a passport in 1952 was unheard of, but I had such a desire to go.

I went to London to the Audrey de Vos School, where John Cranko organized a small group to perform. I had no permit to work – my name in the program was John Smith. I danced in the companies of Kenneth MacMillan and Peter Wright. Everybody from London came to see us, and Ninette de Valois was very complimentary on my interpretation of the "Tritsch-Tratsch Polka." Boy! My chest inflated instantly and my nose went up in the air. Little did I know how little I knew. And this I realized when I arrived in Paris in 1953.

II.

After auditioning in London for *Guys and Dolls*, and being accepted, a friend of mine in Paris wrote to say that if I came immediately, I stood a chance to join the Ballet Janine Charrat. Since classical dance was my first love, there I was on the train and boat, across the English Channel and into Paris. Paris became my home for 12 years. Many hours of classes and rehearsals lead to starring roles in the newly formed Milorad Miskovitch's Ballet des Etoiles de Paris. The company's debut was in the Roman Amphitheater in Lyons, where later on I would do my first important choreography. During my days in Paris I did several films and TV, especially with Geraldine Chaplin before she was offered the role in *Dr. Zhivago*.

For a ballet dancer, I am relatively tall – and I guess that helped me partner many ballerinas of that period. One who I loved to dance with was Colette Marchand. She was full of charm and *joie de vivre*. John Taras created the *Suite New-Yorkaise* for us in Monte Carlo. I remember that evening because it was a gala

performance with Prince Rainier and Princess Grace in the Royal Box. The second ballet on the program was *LEchelle*. I had to do violent turns on my bottom and the rough floor had a nail in it, so I lost the seat of my pants. As I was lying on the floor, I suddenly felt cold air and realized that if I turned the wrong way, the audience and royalty would see my exposed behind – so I had to improvise the choreography as the ballet progressed. The choreographer, Milko Sparemblek, was angry that I had dared to do that – but when I showed him the "choices" I had...we all had some great laughs.

My "break" as a dancer came when I was chosen for the role of the lover in the ballet, *Lovers of Teruel*, in the company of Ludmilla Tcherina. This very beautiful woman was delightful to work with and the role was perhaps one that suited my temperament the best. Her husband would invite us after rehearsals to a small bistro where we had as much spaghetti as we could eat. Zizi Jeanmaire, whom I danced with in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, was difficult to work with. She kept her distance, perhaps because I took that part in the middle of the season.

I later danced in the Ballet Ho, and also with Josephine Baker in Italy. George Reich introduced me to musical comedy and jazz. That took me to the *Lido de Paris* show, and then the *Follies Bergere* on Broadway. At this point, I had already done several choreographies, the most important was *Oedipus the King*, working with Jean Cocteau and composer Maurice Thiriet. This gentleman had come four years before to Lousanne to visit his daughter. She and I were studying with Boris Kniaeff, and after the dance lesson, I asked Mr. Thiriet if he would like to see the little *pas de deux* I had just choreographed. After the demonstration he said that he would like me one day to do choreography for his music. I forgot the incident, but one day, while I was dancing in the *Lido*, he called and offered me the choreography for *Oedipus the King*. The success was great and I was asked to return to Lyons to choreograph the ballet of my choice. This followed with more choreography for operas in Geneva and the Bueno Aires Ballet. I was also commissioned to do Mozart's *Idomeneo* for the Grand Theatre in Geneva.

III.

When I say that it was Mozart who brought me to Las Vegas, people think I am nuts. But it is true. That difficult and seldom-performed opera uses the story from Greek mythology, and the director wanted the whole opera to be danced. So I decided to study with

Martha Graham to enlarge my vocabulary of dance. George Reich was working on the *Follies Bergere* for Broadway in 1964, so he suggested I come as a principal dancer (my partner was the beautiful and vivacious Liliane Montevocchi). I could attend classes in the afternoon at Graham's school. The Tropicana Hotel director of entertainment came to see the show and offered us both a contract for three months. I saw an opportunity to pay for my little studio apartment in Paris, so I said yes. That was in 1964 and I am still here. Thank you Amadeus!

I fell in love with the desert, with its blue skies, and surrounding mountains. Working at the Tropicana was great, with Peter Genero, Hermes Pan, and Larry Maldonado. But after eight years, I wanted to get back to classical dance. So I went to UNLV and offered to teach ballet. They let me have the Judy Bayley Theatre, and in September of 1972, with about 25 dancers from different shows on the Strip, we did our first performance of three ballets, which I choreographed. What makes me proud is that there was no money involved, just the love of our profession. And we won! My friend, Nancy Houssels, was in the audience, and she was very happy to see that Las Vegas was ready for a ballet company. So she said, "Let's start a company." The reason that we are still together and doing it is the great understanding and respect we have for each other. Here is the most fortunate situation for an artist. I would direct the artistic side of it, and she would provide the necessities for the realization of my dreams. And this "Vision in the Desert" has lived for 20 years! As soon as we could afford it, we brought in guest choreographers, scenic designers, a technical director, etc. I believe the versatility of the program is the excitement of the theatre.

During the past several years, I have choreographed many operas for major opera companies. I especially enjoyed working on *War and Peace* in Seattle. After a general rehearsal of *Queen of Spades* at the San Francisco Opera Company, one stagehand stopped me and asked if it was true that I, who had choreographed a Mozart-style ballet, was really from Las Vegas. He couldn't believe that anybody really lived here. That is also a remark we hear often on our national tours across the USA.

Yes, we do live here, and these past 20 years seem just like those flowers in the desert – bright and smiling and proud. We now sail into the next decade with beautiful music and ballets that can bring happiness into our lives and enrich the young souls of our children, to whom the tomorrows belong. aa

What is this thing called ART?

What is art? What is it for? A SURVEY

INTRODUCTION BY SCOTT DICKENSHEETS. *About six years ago, not long after I was married, I bought the ugliest painting in the world. It cost a couple bucks at a pawn shop; it was a primitive portrait of a man and a woman in rough brushstrokes and unappetizing colors. At the bottom, some joker had scrawled "Modigliani." Still, at some level, it connected, so I bought it. My wife can't stand it; she wrinkles her nose at the mention of it. She won't let me display it and I refuse to get rid of it, so it sits behind the bedroom door and I pull it out every now and then. For six years I've been trying to think of a way to explain to my wife why I think that painting is art.*

It's a problem intrinsic to the arts that there is no quick and easy definition of what it is. You could see that fuzziness at work last year in the debates over the National Endowment for the Arts. There's no consensus in the public mind about what constitutes art, and therefore why these often unsettling images might qualify. In the long run, that may be for the best.

Still, we thought it might be interesting to start groping toward a definition, so we surveyed a random selection of people in the Las Vegas arts community, asking them: What is art? What is art for? We gave them little or no warning because we wanted spontaneous, unscripted answers instead of well considered artists' statements. Despite our best ambush tactics, we received some predictable answers, but we got some unusual ones as well: witness John Jasinski's metaphorical eloquence, or John Stockman's blunt cynicism. By stirring everything together we hope to provide, if not a clear definition (impossible anyway), at least some food for thought.

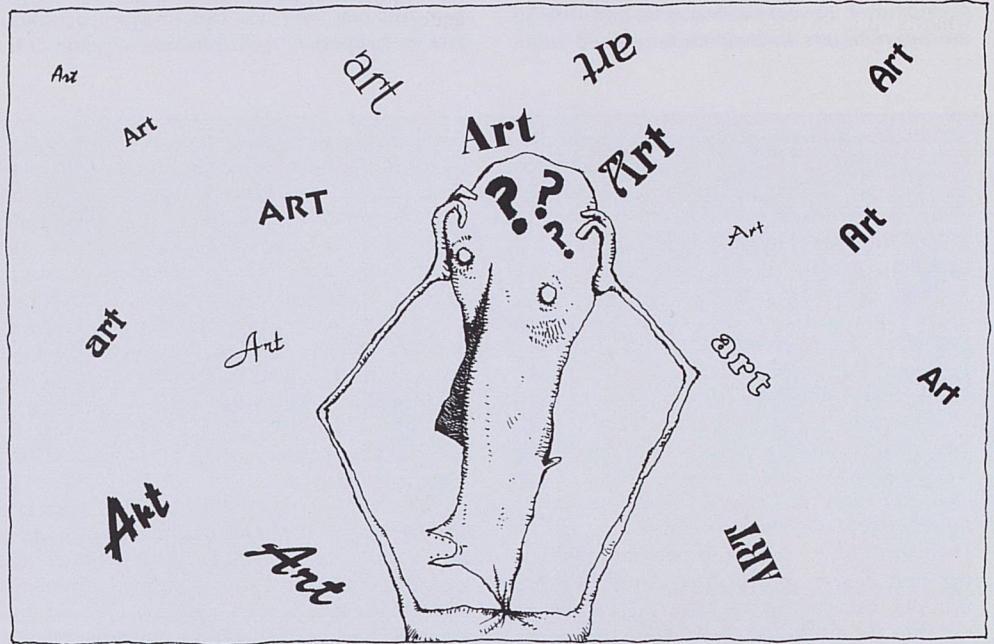


Illustration by Scott Dickensheets.

OPENING THE CORRAL

DON HANNAH *Musician, composer:* I wouldn't dare get into a discussion like this. I wouldn't be able to give you a straight answer.

DENISE SHAPIRO *Gallery manager, Las Vegas-Clark County Library District:* The arts, in any culture or community, it's their soul. It's sometimes very much reflective of what's going on in the community, sometimes not. It's part of what enriches each human being as an individual, much more than other things can. It's a very intimate experience.

DAVID HICKEY *Art critic, instructor, UNLV:* It's a category of perception, something you look at in the context of looking at art, instead of in the context of, say, weather. So it's a contextualizing activity.

JOHN J. JASINSKI *Director, Nevada Institute for Contemporary Art:* A friend of mine once said you can let anything into the corral, but what you decide to let out perhaps then becomes art. I think the notion of opening the corral and letting things in and then sorting it out isn't all bad. You can have your high standards, but at the same time, by having the corral open to everyone, you give others credit for having common sense and perhaps another way of looking at things.

STEPHEN CAPLAN *Musician, Sierra Wind*

Quintet: This may sound spooky, but I think art is trying to make the mundane eternal, to make it greater than it is.

MARK MASUOKA *Artist, owner, Mark Masuoka Gallery:* I think art is basically walking and chewing gum at the same time: It's an everyday process, things you do naturally, without thinking about it. That's really what the root of art-making is all about, an extension of a human condition.

JOHN STOCKMAN *Sculptor; President, Desert Sculptors Association; Gallery Director, Barrett Allied Arts Gallery:* Art is a creative act of egotism. You're expressing yourself. It's all about your ego; you wouldn't do it otherwise. I've never seen an egoless artist. I've seen humble ones, but they still have an ego.

DAN SKEA *Musician, painter, critic:* I'm a formalist, I tend to think of art as something interesting to look at. Art is also posing questions; it's its own question. And I guess it's a way of expressing our humanness to one another. Clive Bell once said that art is "significant form." Pieces put together in in some way that's meaningful to us (and that's always subjective). It's the same in music and the arrangement of notes, or movement in dance. It's not all these unrelated things, but a pattern that we can identify as meaningful.

ROBIN GREENSPUN *Chairman, Nevada State Council on the Arts; owner, Moira James Gallery:* Art to me is what I get up for every day. It's what makes the world an interesting place. I think there is literally art in everything we do, it's a function of daily life. That decision

people make when they make something, something we might use every day, when they decide what it will look like, feel like, what it will mean. That's the art. You don't survive without art; if we did, everything would be black and white.

DENISE SHAPIRO: Art is thought, a way to question things, and change things, and with that comes enrichment of your society, your culture, yourself. Ultimately, it is getting you to know what you're responding to, and what is your identity.

MARK MASUOKA: Art is for humans; from day one it's been a way of communicating, of talking about a specific type of culture, that's why it's important – it has so many defining characteristics about what the culture that surrounds it is all about.

JOHN SMITH *Director, Nevada School of the Arts:* To me, everything around me everyday is art, from the music I listen to on the radio to the art I see hanging on the walls; but also the desk in front of me that was designed by someone to be aesthetic and functional, or the doorknob across from me that was designed by somebody. I guess I sense that everything I encounter is in some form art.

TRAPPERS OF ATTENTION, SOCIAL MISFITS

JOHN STOCKMAN: Artists are trappers of attention. Art is the trap.

MARK MASUOKA: It's not a complicated thing to be an artist. I think most artists think about it in very simple terms, and I think most artists make art because they can't do anything else. Because of their status as social misfits (laughter) they're drawn to making something so-called "creative," or "artistic," which is basically what they can do. The process of making art is a work process like any other, a step-by-step process. If you don't start at step one, you're probably not going to get to step 16.

DENISE SHAPIRO: Artists are not trying to be a separate society.

MARK MASUOKA: Art is accessible to everyone. The misnomer is that only artists make art. I think everyone makes art to some extent. Some make it with a little more background than others. But basically, when I go into the studio, I don't necessarily go in thinking "I am going to make art today." I go into the studio to start a process that has to do with creating an object as the extension of an idea. It's an everyday kind of experience, like making breakfast, it just happens to be making an object we call "art." And I think of it just like that; I think it should be seen in that context, as an extension of that person, and not necessarily raised to a higher level because it's called art. It should be received like everything else. It's a human experience, that's what it is.

IT ALMOST MAKES THEM MAD

DENISE SHAPIRO: A lot of people don't accept contemporary art even still – although it's getting a lot better in this community – because they don't understand it. It almost makes people mad, I've seen, when they don't understand it. It makes them feel this is some sort of exclusive club, and they won't give it time.

BRIAN STROM *Artistic director, Rainbow Company Theatre:* Unfortunately, we live in a time when art has been devalued a great deal. Art is strongest when it is bringing us in contact with different ways of thinking, different ways of feeling; that's why it's so humanistic. It prompts us to have tolerance for different ways of thinking. Unfortunately, we live in a time when people aren't interested in being tolerant to different points of view. A good Persian folk tale could bring us a better understanding of Iraq, for instance, but obviously people are not interested in a better understanding of Iraq.

DENISE SHAPIRO: In this community, I feel that the awareness of art is growing, people are feeling more comfortable with it. Once they get beyond that they can start asking questions about art. People are moving here with a much more contemporary approach. So I see this contradiction here of a very conservative community accepting a lot of changes through the arts. I do see a wonderful change, that more people are accepting contemporary art, are more open to it. I've seen wonderful comments about people saying at first they didn't understand it. They didn't know how to approach it.

DENISE SHAPIRO: I really feel it's a cycle: once people accept art and start appreciating art, then they'll learn more about it, about the artist. That's enriching for the community.

MANY WHOS, MANY WHATS

JOHN J. JASINSKI: In the west, we're so used to taking an object and wondering what it can do for us. But perhaps the important question to start asking in this latter part of the 20th Century, before we enter a new millenium, is "What do I bring to this work of art?" Here it is, it's been created by someone, one hopes with all good judgements and intentions, maybe it's a bit incumbent on me to bring something to this work of art, so that whatever I take away is a synthesis of what the artist has to say and what I think and feel.

On the most basic level, art is important to elicit responses from within ourselves, the resonances that we feel and think about. Art can uplift, it can inform, it can certainly be

political.

BRIAN STROM: What appeals to me most in art is coming into contact with the artist. Whether it's theatre, whether it's paintings, or listening to music, or whatever, the most exciting art carries something of the personality of the primary person who made it. Strong art always carries that emotional stamp of its creator.

ROBIN GREENSPUN: Art is for our mental health. It probably causes as many problems as it can solve, but art gives us a reason to think about things every day. There is art in everything. It's just a way of life.

DENISE SHAPIRO: Art is a puzzle. You look at it and ask why. If you look at something and hate it, you ask why do I hate it? Why did the artist use that black tar? Why are there these things sticking out of it that I don't understand? You say what's the theme, what's the artist trying to say? It's like when you're reading a book, you ask, why did that character do that? That's what you need to do with art. And the answers *are* there. They can be found.

DAVID HICKEY: The question about good or bad art is: Good for who? Good for what? There may be many "whos" and many "whats". For some it's good for covering a crack in the wall. But I think all art has an ideological function. It reinforces what we believe; that's why real estate people collect landscapes. But I don't think it's magic.

JOHN J. JASINSKI: I suppose some people construe it to be decoration. "I need something over the sofa, I need something here and there." For those folks I would say, yes, that's a place to start. It's not a place to finish, but it's a place to start. If that's the reason you bring art into your environment, then that's good for you. One would hope you would move it from over the sofa to over the chair and see how it looks there. No one is born like Athena from the head of Zeus, knowing what art is. It takes a life time of looking and learning, and we all start at different points on that continuum. But I think it's exciting if we find ourselves aboard a given train at a given time. It's very exciting.

STEPHEN CAPLAN: Art gets us beyond the mundane aspects of life, into another sphere, another realm, beyond the day-to-day.

DON HANNAH: If you figure it out, let me know. I've been wondering about that for years.

POSTLUDE BY SCOTT DICKENSHEETS *It seems chicken for me to be able to pose the questions and not have to answer them. You'll trust me when I say these modest thoughts are as spontaneous as everyone else's.*

As I've experienced it, art is something that creates a channel between the artist and me. It's never an easy bond to articulate, because it happens on a level than can't be described by normal linear thought. The art that appeals to me most is that in which the artist has sincerely invested something significant of himself in the work; that demands an equal investment from me. I also like art that displays some wit. Enough said. aa

My Visit with Mary

You might want to join me on a visit to Mary Warner's studio this lazy summer afternoon, and sit there for a while in the sunlight, with the door open to the passing traffic, and listen to her talk about painting, her father's erratic decorating behavior, fish loaf, and her career as a teenage art forger.

Her studio is an apartment a short walk from both her home and her office at UNLV. It's flooded with warm light from the floor-to-ceiling windows that make up one wall. Drawings in various stages of completion are tacked up on the rest of the walls, where Warner can stare at them and wait for associations to form. She is thin and self-contained, her manner quiet and reserved, elliptical. Her eyes look sleepy, but that may be because she's preparing an upcoming exhibit. The tapes of our conversations will show her talk to be full of hesitations, sentences abandoned midway, tangents pursued. Despite her years in university settings, she hasn't developed a slick, practiced spiel about her work, or at least she doesn't lay it on me, for which I'm grateful.

But you probably want to hear about that forgery business right away. "My mother had been a librarian, and she was still into being a librarian. She'd take apart all the magazines that came into our house and catalogue them in a big filing cabinet according to the subjects.

"She did the same thing with any kind of [art] reproductions. So that's what I did all through high school; the neighbors would pick out reproductions out of these files, and I would paint them at school."

"So you were a teenaged art forger," I say, eyebrows arched.

She laughs. "Yeah, there were a lot of forgeries. I did a lot of Van Goghs, Mondrians, Monets." But she *did* have her ethical standards. "I never signed their names."

Look through some slides of Mary Warner's work if you ever have the chance. If you're one of those people who didn't think it possible to paint a psychologically probing portrait of a cow, you haven't seen her paintings. "These are difficult paintings of what are usually regarded as easy subjects," one critic wrote in the course of a positive review.

"We are so accustomed to looking at abstract art that when faced with representational work we tend to wonder what it really means," one critic wrote of her work. You might label her paintings "realism," and you'd be right, but probably for the wrong reason. It's realistic not because the paintings look like recognizable things, but, as David Hickey (now a critic in residence at UNLV) noted in a 1984 essay that included a review of her work, because it attempts to penetrate appearances and get at the natural/political/psychological forces that affect our lives.

Much of the work that established her reputation features animals set against a swollen sky, peering straight out of the canvas. Examine *Dancer*, for instance, from 1984: The canvas is filled mostly with a swirling, pulpy sky; in the lower right corner there is the head of a horse, eyes straining, the rest of his body not pictured. While it's up to the individual viewer to decide what it means, this is clearly more than a picture of a horse. She painted people, too, and her depictions of daughter Clare are no mere baby pictures. There's something eerily knowing in those dispassionate child eyes.

Warner doesn't paint a lot of cows anymore. She's working with a different vocabulary: hands, flowers, birds, fire, water. Each has a loose symbolic meaning – fire as a destructive purge, hands as instruments of healing, water as a universal element of life – and Warner's tactic is to throw them together in enigmatic diptychs, to see if the paired images have anything to say to each other.

"My early work was much more literal, more story oriented," she says. "Diptychs satisfy that kind of...for me they are like a dialogue between the two images. It has narrative qualities, but it's more like a conversation than a story. That conversation changes by the way you look at the images."

To listen in on that conversation, examine, say, *Firebirds*, one of the key images in the Allied Arts Council's recent Women's Invitational Exhibit. It couples a burning forest with a pair of blue-black parrots. There's a clear phoenix allusion here, but in discussing *Firebirds*, Warner says it also refers to a Nureyev ballet of the same name, as well as a whole web of ecological concerns. "There's an environmental awareness, and it's

psychological too, that all things are hooked together, and when destroying something like a rainforest is like destroying our own sort of...inner kind of...paradise, or whatever."

That's a lot of meaning to pack into one painting. "I'm trying to be more direct," she says of her work. "The diptych work is more unavoidable as to what it's about. I think the dialogue was subtler in the cow paintings." There is, after all, only so much freight a cow painting can carry. The diptych style opens up bigger intellectual and emotional terrain. "The ideas I'm most interested in now is a complete idea, one that will have opposite elements in it. I feel the diptych work is more clear as far as the idea; it's more successful as far as being complete."

All of this is executed in a style so limber and accomplished you get the idea, as did one critic, "that she could paint anything she wanted."

Mary Warner was born in 1948 in Sacramento, California, the oldest of six children and the only one to grow up to become a contemporary painter in Las Vegas in 1991. Her father was a semi-pro baseball player who took a job with the telephone company when his family started growing. His mother, as we have learned, was a former librarian who never lost her instincts.

She says her family wasn't overtly cultural, but describes her parents as creative and resourceful. "My father made furniture, and my mother made our clothes; she made all the rugs in the house. My father...he was quite into painting. He had like a photographic memory, and he would take the paints from our paint by numbers sets and paint whatever my mother wanted. He was very good at that. He was also into decoration; when he had leftover paint in the garage, after it had accumulated for a while, he would start painting things in the yard. He would paint our bicycles, then he would start painting poles, painting stripes around the clothesline pole. Then he'd do all the faucets: he'd paint the pipe one color, next the fittings, then the faucet. And my mother was like, she'd be hoping he'd run out of paint before he reached the front yard."

With five siblings crowding around, Mary

2,637 words about Mary Warner

by Scott Dickensheets



Mary Warner. Photo by Charles Morgan.

found her personal space on paper. "I always drew," she recalls, "all I did was read and make pictures. That tended to give me space within my family. In grade school, other kids would always ask me to draw things. I was into that framework from the beginning."

So becoming an artist didn't involve an actual decision as much as simply following the trajectory already established. She went to California State University at Sacramento as an art and literature major, earning a degree in 1971. For the next few years she went to graduate school at the Chicago Art Institute, taking a degree in 1974.

Returning to Sacramento, she settled into

the life of the struggling artist. She lived in a small house off an alley in a "not-so-great" part of town, carefully marshalling her meager resources. "I gave myself a certain amount of money to live off, for food and stuff, and I just stayed within that. I would make stuff like...fish loaf at the beginning of the week, and just eat that. Which doesn't bother me, eating the same thing over and over. But the stuff I made, like, even my cat wouldn't eat. I spent as much money for cat food for her as I did on the stuff I made, 'cause she wouldn't touch it."

I asked if she'd ever considered getting rid of the cat to double her food allowance, and

to her credit she said no. "Although maybe I hoped she'd find another home, you know, where they liked the food. But she didn't."

She managed to live off of her art, selling paintings, teaching some part-time drawing and watercolor painting classes at the university, and working on a CETA grant, which paid her a monthly stipend in return for paintings that would be owned by the city and displayed in municipal offices.

A one-woman exhibit in the Wenger Gallery in San Francisco in 1974 caught the eye of a talent scout for New York's Whitney Museum, who was trolling the gallery scene for emerging artists. In 1975 she was included

in the prestigious Whitney Biennial.

Now, you might think that attending grad school in Chicago and showing around California would endow one with a certain sophistication in matters regarding the art world. Think again.

"I didn't even go to the [Whitney] opening. I had no concept of... you know, I was just leading my life, and I had no concept of what that meant at all. Some other galleries expressed interest in my work, and I didn't write them back. I was just, ah, naive, or unaware, at that time, of even what that all meant."

A year later she was in Montana, preparing

meant, that all my creative ability would go into raising my daughter."

Clare's birth did prompt changes in Warner's work: she started painting Clare. Meisel didn't particularly like that either, preferring dogs and cows. Warner had a last one-person show at Miesel's gallery, mostly paintings of her daughter. "I did sell some work out of that show, but it was like he wasn't all that excited about it. I had done animals, and then I started doing people; he was pushing me to do cows, but I wasn't interested. He was a nice guy, though."

By 1988 she was at the University of Texas, in San Antonio. A divorce was in process. Her

Charles Morgan, who has appeared in several of her pieces. She's using a mix-and-match technique, pairing it with drawings of hands and flowers and other images pulled from the wall. A drawing she rejects usually hangs around to be tried in another diptych. "Some things I finish and they're done, I never touch it again. Other things, I'll work on for years. Every time I get it back from a show, I'll paint on it. Sometimes there will be a kind of click, and things move into focus, they seem very clear, and I'll know that it's done."

"A lot of artists do sketches in their sketchbooks," she continues. "I write down titles. It's like the words trigger images. That's about the plan I have. I generally have a concept in mind, though it's not always the image I come up with. I just keep putting stuff up until things start moving together conceptually."

Clarity is the characteristic she tries to achieve in her artwork. "If I could have anything, clarity is what I would want, that feeling of being able to see, of everything being clear." Clarity is such an important principal to her that it's what she had in mind when she named her daughter Clare.

Moving to Las Vegas not only had the beneficial effect of clearing up lingering illnesses suffered in the humid climates of Oklahoma and Texas, it also gave Warner a bit of artistic elbow room.

"I'm really sensitive to the environment I'm working in. Like when I moved to Oklahoma, my work started getting tighter, a lot more realistic. It was so *finished*. It's hard for me to even look at some of the work I did there because it's so repressed, it seems so, like, if it gets even a little tighter, it's gonna explode.

"It was time for me to get into a situation that would allow me to experiment. It's, like, *in my mind*, you know; there wasn't anyone in Oklahoma saying, 'Don't you....' It's more of a psychological climate.

"The air of potential to me is a really welcome change from being in the Midwest, where there seems to be more of a program; not that there isn't one here, there's just a feeling of potential that I enjoy working in. I feel I have more freedom to express myself, more confidence."

"Have you ever just had it up to here with the whole art thing?" I ask. The business end, sometimes, she replies. Every now and then, in frustration, she entertains the idea of just painting things and giving them away on street corners. But...nah.

"When I don't make art for a while, I get grumpy," she says, pensive. "I totally lose myself in it. That's something humans really enjoy, to be completely engaged. So I can't see myself ever stopping.

"It's always been, like, I'd like to do it *more*. It's like TV...I think there are a lot of things in life that don't demand a complete kind of engagement, and it's...a human tendency to slide into doing those things, because they're more passive. It's like if I watch more than an hour of TV, I feel like I need a bath. If I don't do enough work, I don't feel engaged in my life, I start feeling distant from my environment, my conversations with people, everything I do starts feeling really far away. I guess art kind of grounds me." aa



A sample of Mary Warner's sketches of hands.

an exhibit at the University of Montana, when she nabbed a one-semester sabbatical fill-in position at the school. She was there five years and was on tenure track, when her then-husband, sculptor Ken Little, decided to wiggle out of an unwanted appointment as chair of Montana's art department by getting a job at the University of Oklahoma. Warner joined the faculty there as well in 1981.

In 1982, work in hand, Warner took her first trip to New York City. After a round of gallery visits, she was included in a four-person emerging artist exhibit at the non-profit Drawing Center. A gallery owner named Louis K. Meisel bought all but one of her pieces (the other was purchased by someone else), and began carrying her work in his gallery.

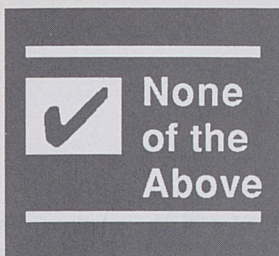
"I was doing mostly dogs and cows, which he really liked," Warner recalls. Things changed in 1984. "I had my daughter Clare, which he *didn't* like," she says. "He was really upset. He had a lot of notions about what that

old friend Jim Pink, on staff at UNLV, told her about an artist-in-residence program here, and a year later Mary Warner arrived in Las Vegas. She liked it well enough to stay after the UNLV gig ran out.

Mary Warner's resume lists 108 exhibitions, 30 of them solo or duo shows. We are examining the makings of number 109 (or 31). An exhibit of her hands and flowers pieces will be in the Green Valley Library October 29 through December 1. Right now, much of it is tacked to the walls of her studio.

"My goal is to have my shows done a couple of weeks ahead of time," she says with a bit of self-deprecating laughter, "so there's a kind of cooling off period, when you can look at the work and see how you really feel about it."

She motions to a work in process, tacked to the wall. Half of it – the half she wants to keep – is a somber portrait of photographer



"My Career as a Non-Musician"

by Patricia McConnel

I only recently learned that an augmented fifth is *not* a bottle of Jim Beam laced with Thunderbird. That's how much I know about music. I blame my ignorance variously on my mother, Stan Kenton, World War II, radio, and the church.

Lawrence Welk, Guy Lombardo, and Bing Crosby were in their heydays when I was growing up in the early forties, and my mother idolized them. Since she had control of the radio dial (no TV in those days!) I didn't know any other musical forms existed until I was old enough to make forays into the world of drug store soda fountains, where I heard what way playing on the jukeboxes.

I hated the brassy blare of the big bands – Stan Kenton was king at the time – even more than the soupy arrangements of Welk and Lombardo. They *all* set my teeth on edge. World War II was a bad time for music, on the whole. What wasn't saccharine or overly brassy was idiotic. Hits I remember hating were "Flat Foot Floogie With a Floy Floy," "Mairsy Doats," and "Down Inna Meddo Inna Itty Bitty Poo."

So I thought I didn't like music. But one song my mother sang appealed to me. It was an ancient, sentimental ballad left over from the last century, called "Believe Me If All These Endearing Young Charms." It was almost as difficult to sing as "The Star Spangled Banner," but for some reason I liked it.

At about the age of nine I bought a nineteen-cent plastic flute from the five- and-ten (now they call them recorders and charge \$20 for them). Laboriously I struggled to fit all the notes of "Endearing Young Charms" into the limited range of my flute. I had to keep trying different places to start, until the lowest note was not lower than my flute would play and the highest note not higher. I didn't know I was "transposing." I suppose I could have gone on to become a reasonably competent musician, but the effort of making all those notes fit exhausted me and I wasn't up to learning anything else.

Soon after this I started attending Sunday School, where I joined the choir. During my first choir practice, everyone was singing too high for me, so I sang in my own comfort range. The choir director stopped the music. She looked at me and said, "You think you are singing alto, but you are just singing one note lower than the others." Everyone looked at me. I was mortified. We started over and I tried my best to reach the high notes but I couldn't. I never went back. It was years before I understood that I was not singing "one note" lower; I was singing a full octave lower. I was a natural contralto and the choir director was too ignorant to know it.

I had one more try at singing. During my Beatnik period, a friend and I sang folk songs in an L.A. coffee house. I sang lead and Alta

sang harmony. There was also a jazz combo that played on weekends, led by a big blonde gal. One night she invited me to sing with the combo. I chose a song and she asked me what key they should play it in. "Key?" I said. "I don't know." Alta always decided those things. "Try B flat," the big blonde told the group. The combo started playing and I tried to sing.

Ah, friends. B flat is right in the middle of impossible for me. Stuck there on stage, I tried my Sunday school trick. I sang an octave lower than the combo was playing. Too low. I sounded like a frog.

Next verse I switched to an octave higher – too high. I sounded like the noon whistle at the factory. It would have been all right if the audience had covered me with conversation, but they were embarrassed into dead silence.

I never sang outside the shower again.

That's the way things stood until this year. Then, I needed to write a play based on my book, *Sing Soft, Sing Loud*. The singing that needs only to be mentioned in the book has to take place for real on the stage. One song, in particular, is extremely important to the resolution of the play. I had to find a song that it bluesy, feisty, and rebellious, and also in the public domain, since small theatres are reluctant to produce plays where permission fees must be paid. That eliminated almost everything but traditional blues, folk songs, and spirituals.

I spent a lot of time and money sending for music collections through interlibrary loan and pouring through them. I borrowed records and tapes from friends. I couldn't find anything that fit. I asked my musical friends for ideas. I got lots of suggestions, but none satisfied me.

Finally I faced the fact that I had to write my own song. I had exhausted every resource I could think of. "I can't do this," I thought, and spent all afternoon lying down with the

pillow over my head.


But the pain of not creating is worse than the pain of creating, so there came a moment when I said, "I've got to do this," and I sat up and tried out a tune and some words. They worked. I was exhilarated; the words came faster. By the next morning I had a tune and six verses, and of course they were exactly what I should have done in the first place.

The next problem was that I don't know how to write music. My first idea was to find someone to write it for me. But one day I was browsing through a computer magazine and saw an ad for a program called *Deluxe Music*. The ad claimed I could play a tune on a simulated keyboard on the computer screen (my Macintosh has a built-in sound system) and see it immediately scored as music. I could change it as much and as often as I wanted, and then play the whole thing back. "In-credible," I thought. A Moog synthesizer the Macintosh ain't, but hey, I knew at the very least I could peck out my melody, hit and miss.

So I ordered the program and it does everything it claims to do and more. It forces me to learn how to write music because if I put a half-note where a quarter note goes it is a disaster – it won't let me put more notes in a bar than are allowed. I had to learn what all those little squiggles mean. A rest and a half-rest and all that stuff. Whew.

In a few days I had a composition I could play on the computer and it was the tune in my head, exactly. I printed out the sheet music. I look at it and say, "I did that."

So at the age of 59 I have written my first song. I'm so encouraged I went out and bought myself a blues harmonica. So far, I haven't found a computer program that will teach me how to play it. **aa**



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by Peggy Roehsler

LONGITUDES & ATTITUDES

I am a Southerner, I can't help it, after spending 27 of my 31 years in Charleston, SC and Atlanta, GA, with a brief sojourn in North Carolina. The South is part and parcel of me. Those twisted Cypress roots run through my brain. I love its tangled humid greenery, the soupy summer air, the blurred edges of the Southern world. So the task I have set myself – or which has been set for me, since I am here only after being dragged away by love, kicking and screaming – the task before me is this: how to come to terms with this different, alien land. How to exist in it, much less enjoy it, let alone someday love it.

It's just so different here, so unimaginably, feel-it-to-the-bottom-of-your-toes different from what I expect the world should be. Let's skip the squalid surreality of Vegas and go straight to the part that's supposed to be easy to love, that vast, untamed wilderness out there. It's impressive alright: those unending stretches of nothingness broken at intervals by crazy, psychedelic mazes of rock and scree and sand, landscapes where huge prehistoric creatures should bellow and thud. And it is, of course, beautiful. But when you see a panorama like that, a vista of multicolored sun-drenched rock, is the natural human impulse to want to run out into it, or to gaze at it from the air-conditioned safety of your car? I come from a place where the views are inviting, where the scenery speaks of water, flora, fauna, and general abundance, where the model is the Garden of Eden, not the Gates of Hell.

This is the problem: This land, this brutal sun, don't want us here. The desert offers almost nothing; maybe an Indian could survive out there by sucking pieces of Joshua tree and eating sun-dried scorpions, but I defy anyone accustomed to indoor plumbing to do it. Get lost in the North Georgia Mountains and your chances of finding a stream, some berries, and a critter to cook are pretty good. Get lost in the desert with only a quart of Gatorade and a boy scout knife and you will die if you don't get yourself out shortly. I find it difficult to forget that, even gazing in admiration at the Valley of Fire.

I don't think I'm alone in this. In fact, the longer I'm here and the more I talk to Westerners and read what they have written

about this land, the more I sense that even the natives are uneasy with this place. Of course, everyone here is from somewhere else (except Indians, and I can't pretend to write from an Indian's perspective; the most I can claim is a sort of generalized Urban Person's experience). Everyone in the East (except, once again, Indians) is from somewhere else, too, but it's been a much longer time since they were there. The exhibit of Mary Ann Bonjorni's work at UNLV last spring was an epiphany for me; she's a damn *coug* and she can't figure out how human beings are supposed to exist in this place. And if people who love the West can't manage to be easy here, how can I possibly do it?

I think it's significant that the art of the West, that is, the art we think of when we think of such things – Remington's bronze tamers of nature, Louis L'Amour's frontier tales, endless oils of the Grand Canyon – is so realistic, so rooted in the land and the struggle to tame it, so enamored of grand sweeps of sand, sky, prairie. These rugged images are the geographical doppelgangers of Eastern artists' pearly landscapes and complacent ancestors. No classical references here, thank you. Polished marble doesn't belong to the same world as all this weathered sandstone, Scotty's Castle to the contrary. This is not a place that encourages an artist to turn inward. Even as the rest of the art world moved from realism to subjectivity and celebration of the artist's particular vision, Western art remained essentially documentary. It's as if all this landscape somehow precludes imagination. Paint me, says the desert. Draw me. Back East, the artist lives in symbiosis with nature, and is free to use it or not. Here, there is nothing but nature, and you don't live with it, you struggle against it. How can an artist, an intuitive being, ignore that mighty struggle? It demands to be portrayed, grappled with. Even Bonjorni's constructions are rooted in the real, parched world we attempt to disguise with shopping malls and shallow lakes. Look! a real horse hoof, a bale of hay, grass seed sprouting. It's like the war between the sexes, this struggle to love this harsh, unforgiving land.

It must breed expansiveness, living out here with all this S P A C E. In the East,

one experiences the world in vignettes – you round a corner, come over a hill, enter or leave a forest. Here, what you see is what you get; there are surprises, but not sudden ones. Things loom here. The land, all of it, is ever-present, both physically and in your conscience. Having said that the Western landscape doesn't beckon to me, I must now also confess that I've done more "nature" things out here than I ever did back East. Maybe it's simply because there are fewer *non-nature* things to do here, but I think more likely it's the compelling presence of the desert. The thing about the scenery I'm used to is that you're comfortable with it, so it becomes unremarkable; you can't ever feel completely at ease in the desert, and so you can't ignore it.

Do Westerners feel similarly displaced when in the East? A friend here, originally from my South, says when he goes back he feels cramped, wondering, "Where's my sky?" Perhaps someday I'll crave the openness, the elbow room of home, home on the range (but I don't think I'll ever catch myself wondering "Where's my neon?").

Sometimes I ache to be home in Atlanta, to be snug in my warm, warped, damp, flea-ridden house watching the summer rain splash muggily down on the kudzu. Strange that I should feel such ties to a place which is not even mine by birth, having been spawned by a British Mum and an avowedly Yankee father in New York, New York, that bastion of everything Ashley Wilkes detested. And I need to make it clear that I detest certain traditional Southern attitudes toward people who are not Southern, or white, or conformists. It's the new urban South I long for: the comforting anonymity of the city cradled in that soft Southern landscape.

And the people here, I have to say, are nicer. Many of them, of course, are from other places, but usually places west of the Mississippi. Even the check-out person in Smith's genuinely seems to mean it when she tells me to have a good night. The folks I've gotten to know at all well have a broad-mindedness, an easy grin, that you don't find on prissy Easterners. There's so little territory back there, people are ever-vigilant against encroachment. And the lack of tradition out here means, in most cases, that we're all outsiders, so there's no particular ostracism for newcomers.

Is the choice, then, between unyielding human beings and an unyielding landscape? And will I ever feel like more than a visitor, here in the desert? Does anyone? Or will I someday find myself stuck at someone's Atlanta wedding, cursing the humidity and feeling hemmed in? And how important is sense of place to sense of self anyway? Some would say that the healthy carry home with them, like psychic turtles. These are questions, I suppose, peculiar to neither West nor East: questions impossible to resolve and best explored from the intuitive perspective of the artist – not the idolatrous infatuation of a Remington, but the quirky tough love of a Bonjorni. aa

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by Kamy Cunningham

"WINE, SWANS, & PIZZA"

Wine is a closed book (or bottle) to me. All of the nuances of flavor and bouquet and nose and fragrance are lost on me. I don't experience the thrill of the sophisticate when I swish it in a glass or roll it on my tongue.

When I went to Napa Valley recently, to a writers' conference, I didn't go so much for the wine as for the poetry. In fact, I found more poetry in the names of some of the wineries (Stag's Leap and Silverado and Far Niente and Domaine Chandon) than I did in their products.

But then I didn't find much poetry in the poetry itself. Instead I found a lot of short story writers and poets and a scattering of novelists writing about pain and death and wallowing in suffering.

Every night someone read at a different winery. The first evening we were high up in the hills, in a room that was all windows and vaulted oak ceilings, listening to a poet with heavy metal gold eyes and a lion's mane of mournful hair sing out his words like a dirge. He spoke of the gnashing of pain and the darkness of death. Outside the windows, the sun was going down and the sky was changing from claret to Zinfandel to Cabernet Sauvignon.

I slipped quietly out of my seat and onto the verandah. A cool wind washed away the burning amber eyes of the poet. A thin, silver river, a mere brushstroke, ran between dark velvet hills; the horizon looked like a Late Harvest Chardonnay. Back inside there was the endless singsong of the mournful dirge, bleeding the life out of the language. Death, I decided, was definitely not the mother of beauty.

The fiction writers weren't any different from the poets. Over the next few nights we sat through stories about "relationships" (the big word in fiction writing nowadays, apparently)—dreary, solemn, futile monologues of intense family drama. There were hardly any manuscripts with humor, lightness, joy, spriteliness (my novel was, of course, the exception). All was about the dark, tormented shredding of the heart. *Dallas does it better.*

One of the wineries had vats the size of the space shuttle. I looked down over a room of these and experienced a dreadful moment of Hitchcockian wine vertigo, or agrapaphobia, a fear of plunging into one of them. then I thought, "If I have to listen to one more heavy-duty, industrial-strength emotional abuse story, I may start tossing a few of my fellow writers in these vats."

The highlight of the week was a reception at the estate of Francis Ford Coppola (yes, the one who makes movies). We nibbled cheese and crackers and bread and sipped wine on a shady verandah dotted with comfortable chairs. Then we moved to the back of the house where, instead of a barbecue, Coppola has a huge pizza oven. Two men in chef hats and coats turned out homemade pizza

all afternoon, flattening out the fragrant white balls of dough, and sprinkling them thickly with cheese and tomato sauce and bell peppers and mushrooms and pepperoni and sausage. Picnic tables with red checkered cloths were set under the trees, and on the back verandah a young woman in a ruffled peasant dress made big bowls of salad.

On the verandah, and across the lawn, the poets came and went, talking of misery and agony.

I piled a plate high and wandered off into a nearby forest, munching as I went. (It was really a thin gathering of trees, but I've lived in Las Vegas so long that even a few trees together are, for me, inspiringly reminiscent of a forest.) Eventually I found a pond full of ducks and two swans. In the domestic duck world, humans mean food. Swans and ducks glided efficiently toward the bank. The swans heaved themselves out of the water and lumbered hopefully toward me, looking appealingly awkward on land. A bunch of ducks waddled in their wake. I tossed out a spray of pizza crusts and bread crumbs, and then flung handfuls of the same into the middle of the pond. The migration turned sharply toward the water, looking graceful again.

Back on the verandah, the poets came and went, talking of misery and agony.

Here on the pond, everybody was having a high old time chasing down pizza crusts. A happy spectacle.

The Romantic poets, two centuries ago, taught us to find comfort in nature. the simple joy of breadcrumbs upon the water.

Back on the verandah, I found a poet with a shock of bohemian white hair, who looked faintly like Frank Kermode at his most pontifical, holding forth to an avid group of acolytes on the sorrows and cadences of the youthful Keats and the elder Yeats and the danger of mixing wine and desire in an age of aching gynophallocentricism. Behind him was dessert. The young woman in the ruffled peasant dress was setting out two elegant silver coffee urns and plates piled high with

homemade chocolate chip cookies.

I sipped and munched and watched the hills deepen into grape and mauve and the late afternoon light. By some trick of the optical side show, rippling aquamarine shaded into underwater purple, and the shadows carved out a blue dolphin on the hillside of a phantom sea.

Other people's kitchens fascinate me. Coppola's had a stove that looked like it had been transported from the hall of a medieval castle, and windows everywhere to let in the sun and the hills and the cool breeze.

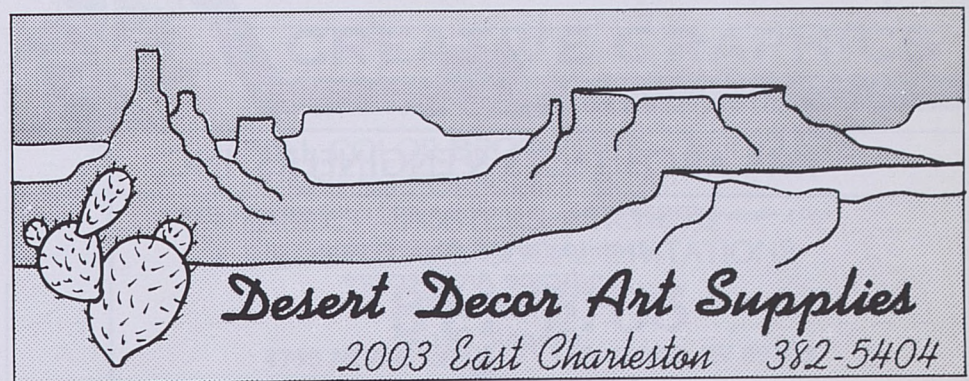
So far our host hadn't made an appearance, but about midway through my tour of the house, someone who looked like he lived there, someone, in fact, who looked like Francis Ford Coppola, came downstairs and sat at the big wooden table in the middle of his kitchen and began peacefully eating leftover pizza.

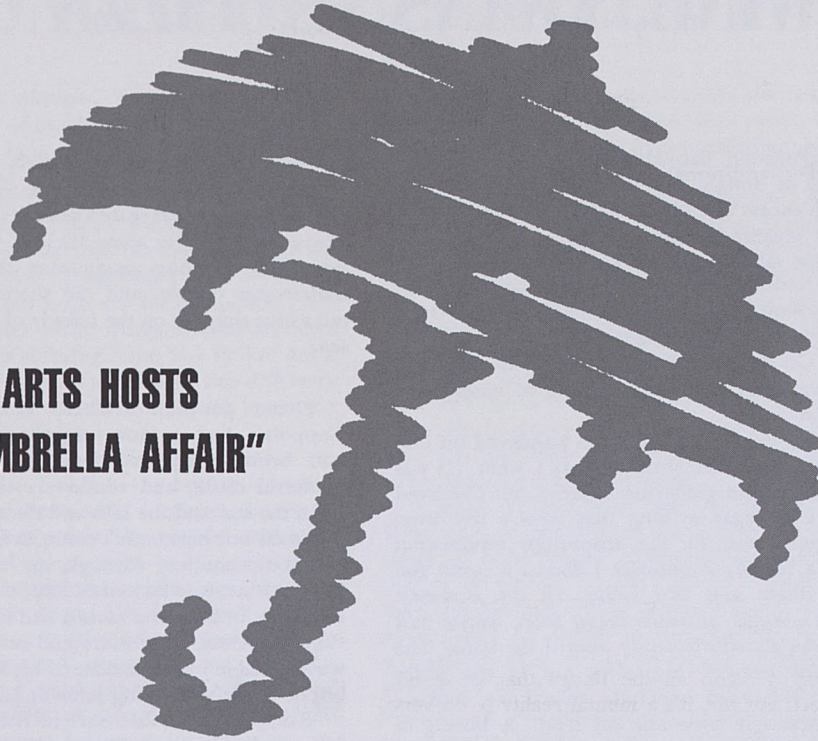
Every house should have its friendly spirit. This, I decided, was Francis Ford Coppola's pizza ghost.

I'm not sure that mixing memory and desire in a parched wasteland between a past you've never had and a future you'll never make is the artist's mission. But not everyone there was intent upon heavy metal parched misery. The particular writer I worked with the most was reassuringly wholesome, solid, whimsical, and humorous. He had tanned arms, a Santa Claus twinkle in his eye, and an alligator on his t-shirt. We talked about potato salad, barbecue chicken, tomato bisque soup, and whether the Braves could make it into the playoffs.

Beauty is in a sunset, not a sonnet. Pizza is more important than poetry. One well-made chocolate chip cookie is of more use and joy to humankind than 100 stories about misery.

Let all those writers disappear into the valleys of Napa and commune with the shadows. I'd rather watch a couple of swans paddling after bread crumbs. I'd rather watch the sun go down over the wine-dark hills. aa





ALLIED ARTS HOSTS "AN UMBRELLA AFFAIR"

On Saturday, October 5, the Allied Arts Council will host "An Umbrella Affair," an afternoon of complimentary food, coffee, numerous raffles, hands-on art activities for children, cultural information and, of course, umbrellas. It runs from 1 to 5 p.m. in the Allied Arts Council space at 3750 South Maryland Parkway. Admission is free.

The event takes its title and theme from the historic Umbrella Project in Southern California and Japan by noted international artist Christo, which features huge blue umbrellas marching down to the sea in California, and huge yellow umbrellas marching away from it in Japan. Allied Arts is organizing bus tours to the site (California, of course, not Japan).

"The title also recognizes Allied Arts' role as an umbrella organization supporting all the arts in Southern Nevada," says Council president Fred Cover.

There will be many prizes raffled at frequent intervals during the afternoon, including umbrellas autographed by celebrities and artists, gourmet pies made by hotel chefs,

dinners, and, lastly, a prototype of the huge Christo project umbrella.

For kids, there will be a mural painting project. "We hope this bit of hands-on art activity will stimulate in the youngsters a greater interest in the arts," Cover said.

And there will be representatives and information from dozens of area cultural groups for those wishing to become more familiar with the arts in Las Vegas.

Among the many businesses who donated items or services are: Basta Sole Umbrella Company; Sweeney's; H&S Distributing; Sam's Town; See's Candy; Ethel M Chocolates; Marie Callendar's Restaurants and Bakeries; Excalibur; the Mirage Hotel; Golden Nugget; Rio Suite Hotel and Casino; K-Mart Stores of Las Vegas and Henderson; Wal-Mart (Nellis Boulevard); Neiman-Marcus; Dillard's (Fashion Show, Boulevard and Meadows malls); Bullock's; Saks Fifth Avenue; Desert Decor; Dick Blick; *Las Vegas Review-Journal*; Smith's Food Store (Sahara and Maryland Parkway); Plant World; C.C. Gem Collectors.

For more information call 731-5419. **aa**

ALLIED ARTS COORDINATES PLAN

The Allied Arts Council is currently coordinating a county-wide effort to devise a community wide cultural plan, according to Allied Arts president Fred Cover, with the ultimate result of addressing a broad range of cultural needs and issues.

Representatives of Clark County and the cities of Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Henderson, Boulder City recently held a two-day preliminary planning session in the Allied Arts offices with arts consultant Dian Magie of the Tucson Arts Council. Tucson has recently completed a similar cultural plan.

Cover says the plan, when completed, will be a blueprint for the cultural development of Las Vegas. It will map out the placement of future arts facilities, match the needs of the arts community with the public and private resources available here, and increase the role of the arts in contributing to Southern Nevada's quality of life.

"The important thing about this cultural plan is that it will address a broad range of of cultural issues and needs within the community, from facilities to programs, in a way that can significantly enhance the quality of life here," Cover said.

Steps to be taken in the near future include an inventory of existing and projected arts facilities, development of a standardized roster of artists, identification of organizations necessary to fit perceived cultural needs, and an economic forecast.

Cover noted that there are obstacles to be overcome in the development of the plan, from the basic difficulties of getting all the governmental entities to work together to the more abstract challenge of increasing public support for the arts.

Organizers of the cultural plan are hoping it will be adopted by all Southern Nevada governmental bodies in the spring of 1993.

"Our role in coordinating this planning effort reflects the Council's renewed commitment to work on behalf of all the arts in Southern Nevada, and the community as a whole."

GAFFEY LEAVES ALLIED ARTS

Patrick Gaffey, long-time executive director of the Allied Arts Council, has resigned from the organization to establish *The Las Vegas Weekly*, a culturally oriented newspaper he plans to start publishing in January.

His eight-year tenure at the helm of Allied Arts was marked by the continued growth of the Council, which under his guidance occupied five increasingly improved office/gallery sites. During that time, Gaffey turned *Arts Alive* from a newsprint newsletter to the slick magazine of today, and established the monthly *Arts Alive Datebook*.

Other programs initiated or developed by Gaffey include the Class Act Live Arts in the Schools program, the Neon Museum effort, the annual Masque Ball fundraiser, the John McHugh Theatre Awards, the Choreographers Showcase, and others. He also helped expand the Jazz Month concert series. Gaffey was

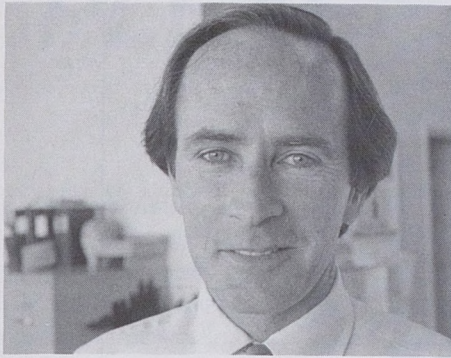


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quick to add that all of these projects were accomplished with "massive help from other staff members and numerous volunteers."



Patrick Gaffey.

"Changes like this," he said of his departure, "present a challenge to any organization, but I'm sure the members of Allied Arts, and the community, will respond with increased support to help Allied Arts. I believe Allied Arts is a key organization and an excellent one that deserves all the support the community can give."

Meanwhile, the Allied Arts Board of Trustees has named development director Jean Norton acting director, and formed a search committee to begin the long process of finding a permanent executive director. **aa**

GALLERY ISSUES CALL FOR ENTRIES

The Allied Arts Council of Southern Nevada is planning its 1992-1993 exhibition year for the Barrett Allied Arts Gallery, and invites interested artists to submit samples of their work for consideration. The deadline is December 1.

The exhibition season will run from September 1992 through August 1993, and will include approximately 12 shows. Selected

REVIEW OF TERMS from page 8.

method, a sort of vocabulary developed over many years of rigorous training, which is used by the dancer to express the music, the choreography, and themselves, as interpretive artists.

Technique is only a means to an end and absolutely not an end in itself. Some dancers possess a small, or limited technique, but, through their magnetism, musicality, artistry, and experience, can move and thrill audiences far more than all the jumps and turns of mere technicians.

Perhaps these short descriptions may add to some readers' understanding and enjoyment of a few of the physical aspects of ballet. And, hopefully, this will lead to an increased appreciation of the special artistic and spiritual gifts only a beautiful ballet performance can give us. **aa**

artists will be notified by December 20.

To be considered, artists should send their name, address, phone number, and 20 labeled slides to Gallery Director, Allied Arts Council, 3750 South Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV, 89119-5619. Slides should be labeled with title, medium, dimensions, and be representative of the work to be shown. Please be sure to include a self-addressed stamped envelope if slides are to be returned.

For additional information, contact the Allied arts Council at (702) 731-5419. **aa**

GALLERY SCHEDULE

Paintings by Suzann Dunaway and sculpture by Dan Gillespie will be in the Barrett Allied Arts Gallery October 8 through November 1, with a 5 to 7 p.m. reception on Friday, October 11.

Dunaway paints "understated but insistent" still life paintings of food, or tools of adult play, such as tennis balls and dumbbells. She seeks to convey "sexual connection and physical joy or aliveness, and also the heavy-in-your-bones, mentally dull feeling when you feel cut off from life, and all the things that make life sweet. For me, it's a mental reality that's very clearly reflected in physical sensation."

Gillespie works with sculptural imagery that refers to simple geometric shapes which often allude to recognizable objects such as diamonds, keyholes, commas, and semi-colons. He uses a variety of materials including lead, salt, wax, bronze, and fiberglass, each with its own densities, light properties, and metaphorical allusions. Gillespie says of his work, "If functions poetically, in that the forms suggest several different interpretations but elude specific meaning, by having several independent but related voices that sound against one another to both diffuse and inform the work."

At press time, a sudden cancellation left the November exhibit uncertain.

Recent masks and paintings by Isabelle Camacho Diamond will be exhibited in the Barrett Allied Arts Gallery December 10 through January 3, with an opening reception December 13.

"I still retain a vivid impression of the processions of masked giants that marked the last Sunday before Lent in the Costa Rican

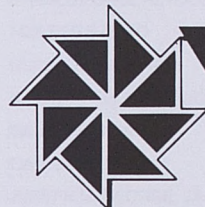
mountain town of my childhood," Diamond says. "My salvation then was to run and hide under my bed from those terrifying characters."

Since those days, Diamond has witnessed religious processions in Pakistan, Iran, Lebanon, Spain, and France, and has participated in the African-origin ceremonies of Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico.



Isabelle Camacho Diamond.

"My childhood fear of masks has transformed into admiration," Diamond says. "Now they represent the mystery and wonder of life. I now create masks and images. These arise from an inner self and materialize in a form that to some may seem grotesque. To me they are one expression of my ever-changing self." **aa**



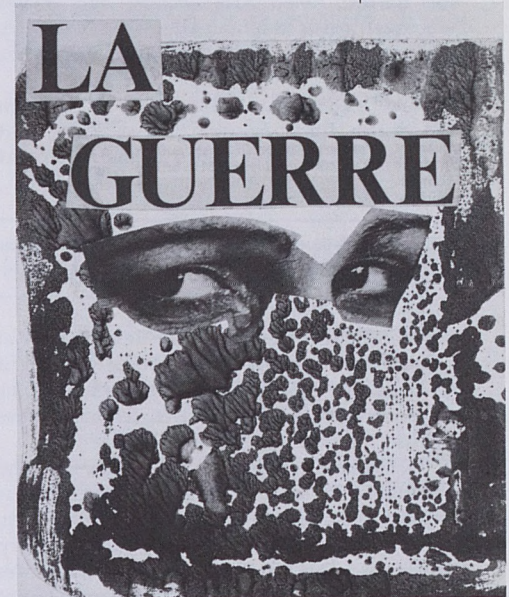
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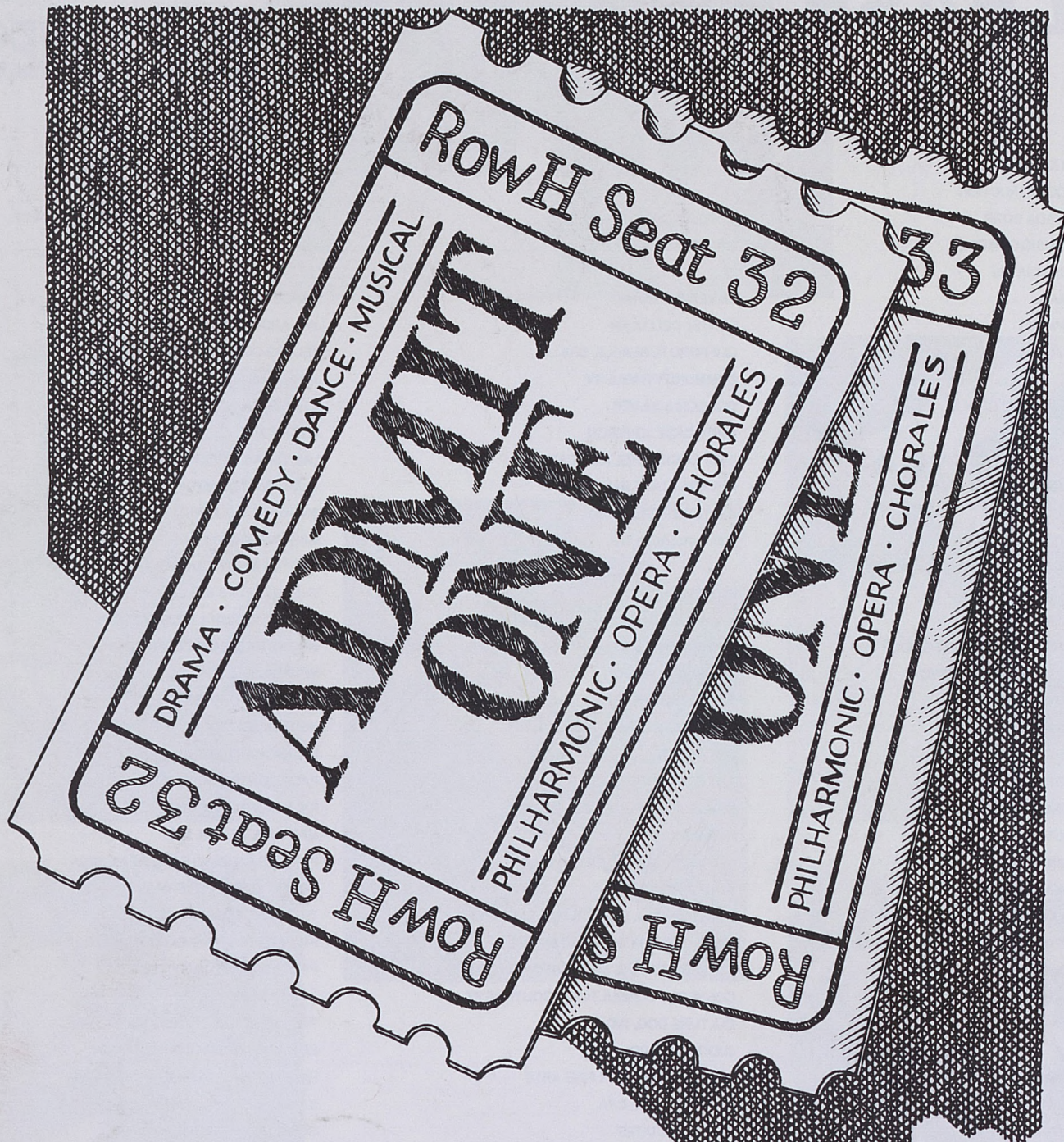
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