

Sand steps

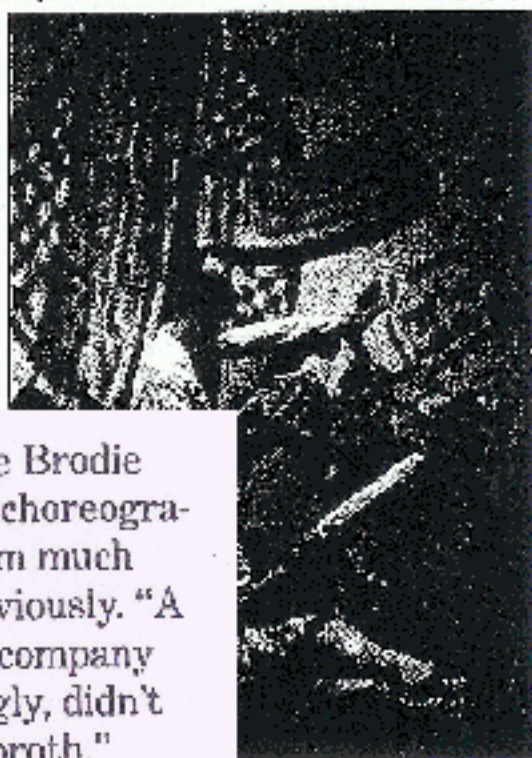
Highlights from this year's Dance in the Desert.

By Hal de Berlioz

Unlike UNLV, which for decades has had a thriving dance department,

the Community College of Southern Nevada did not establish a formal dance program until 1996 when a performing arts and choreographer Kelly Roth agreed to join UNLV's faculty as co-director. Since then, the college has produced Utaolel

Gonzalez, presented numerous dance concerts, attracted permanent guest artists and hosted troupes from other cities. It has sponsored dance tours for its students and formed a permanent dance company, which



rend or trauma?

Johnson. "Terita Requiem," meanwhile, was a fascinating look at the saga of the Gorman people under Nazi, Soviet, and finally American influence. From the camps to the WAC to the tourist, Roth's vignettes were the exquisite, hammer-and-sickle and the cross-in-McDonald's.

Seven excerpts from Roth's over-a-large-scale work, "Cafe Mählens," were presented. His choreography was compelling,

and he displayed a true feel for the 19th-century period and place: set in late 19th-century Vienna. It was with the music that Roth and I parted company. Instead of using Gustav Mahler's own scores, he set his dances to Liszt. Can't blame the arrangements of them. ("Disturbances" might be more accurate.) Arranging a master composer's music should be a privilege, not a presumption, and it should contribute more than mere

change. "Cafe" is a significant work, and both Roth and his public are ready for the real work to stand up.

Los Angeles-based Nannette Brodie Dance Theatre showed a level of choreography, execution and professionalism much higher than what we've seen previously. "A La Fosse" was cooked up by the company members at large, and, surprisingly, didn't look like the proverbial "spoiled broth." Javier Gonzalez was a particular standout. Brodie's jazz work, "After Hours," set to the music of Miles Davis, was in two sections, the first being by far the best. The seven young ladies danced well and persuasively assumed characterizations from mildly flirtatious to downright seductive.

Included in eight "Snippets of Kyia" were work that was by no means least dramatic and intense, as in "Repentance," an anguished communion with Jerusalem's wailing wall, and a dance from "The House of Bernard Albe," based on the French play about love and death. Her humor and joyousness shone in "Sunbathing by the Cottage" about a girl's exhausting attempts to get a man's attention, and "Minuet," just pure dance, delicate and unadorned. As short as these gems were, each had the quality of being fully developed.

Two short, dandy humorous, silent video plays, "I Dreamed I Was Not Dead" in which a coffin was used as a picnic basket by a group of mad mountain travelers, and "The Chameleon Were Black," a continuation of the basketer branch, were skillfully filmed and directed by Roth and edited by Jeremiah

More than 80 other dance works were presented during the festival. These included a solo, choreographed by Margot Collett of UNLV's Dance Faculty, most strikingly performed by Tamara Lohrenz, former prima ballerina of Nevada Dance Theatre (now Nevada Ballet Theatre). Her interpretation was an exquisite re-creation of Bright Chung's haunting score.

Attendance, however, was not what an event like the festival deserved. An entire weekend of enthusiastic and mostly high quality dance performances should have been sold out, especially during these warm weather months when visits from Tempe/Schere are so rare. **B**

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