

Dworin ensemble gives social issues sharp look

By TONY ANGARANO
Courant Dance Critic

Rains, Loons & Moons," the provocative program of works presented by the Judy Dworin Performance Ensemble at the Wadsworth Atheneum's Aetna Theater Friday night, translates important social issues, such as radioactive rain, avian preservation and the dynamics of male/female relationships, into dance theater without trivializing them for shock effect.

Dworin's choreographic concepts, which combine movement, music, spoken text and visual symbols, create a powerful emotional response.

In "Rains," the program's most ambitious premiere, the voices of Rozmarin (Barbara Andrews, Regina D'Amico and Susan Lucibelli) singing strangely beautiful Bulgarian folk music, complement the stunning stage images conceived by Dworin in collaboration with the Performance Ensemble (Kathy Bortek Gersten, KC Chun, Sarah Franklin, Sean Maloney and Lisa Matias Serrambana).

Using black umbrellas as props, the company dramatically enacts the effects of the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe on ordinary people. Through meaningful movements, the music and the spoken commentaries of Krassimira Boikovska, a Bulgarian citizen, "Rains" poignantly personalizes an event that occurred a decade ago and a world away, yet Dworin and her ensemble give it a timeless universality.

"Loona" honors the loon and its preservation. With choreography that appeared mystically and mysteriously Eastern in style, the brief, but brilliantly conceived piece presented Bortek Gersten and Maloney dancing gracefully and rhapsodically with shuffling steps in

DANCE REVIEW

yards of black tulle.

As the loon figure, Chun, shrouded theatrically in the diaphanous fabric, moved with compelling elegance.

In "Mr. Safe-T," Dworin's delightful comic sense explored love and loss from a lonely woman's perspective. Attired in a vintage wedding gown and seated expectantly in a high-backed chair, Dworin embodied the ever-hopeful romantic looking for perfect love in a man "strong, silent, sensitive ... the mister master of my dreams," but finding satisfaction, not in Maloney's smoldering presence, but in the more malleable Mr. Safe-T — a surprise figure.

Under the work's humor lurks a deeper, darker commentary about women who fantasize and the real men who fail to satisfy them.

"Lulu and the Moon," the program's only revival, still enchants with its wonderful weirdness about a man unsuccessfully trying to grasp the moon and the woman who easily possesses it.

In roles originally created by Dworin and Tim Moran, Serrambana and Maloney captivated with their polished physicality and dramatic expression.

Sometimes the look on her face conveyed an entire handbook of the feminist movement, but with a knowing sense of the ridiculous. He became the charming, but dominant man who always gets away, but will live to regret it.

The Judy Dworin Performance Ensemble will present "Rains, Loons & Moons" at the Avery Theater/Wadsworth Atheneum, 600 Main St., today at 4 and 8 p.m. Information: 527-9800.

The Hartford Courant.
Established 1764.

10/26/96