

The Hartford Courant

on, Vol. CLIII No. 293

Saturday, October 20, 1990—8 Sections

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Experimental dance work has appealing originality

By TONY ANCARANO
Special to The Courant

Dance review

As audiences and arts commissions grapple with new definitions of aesthetics, the human figure remains the primary expression of creation. In "Distant Voices Coming Near," Judy Dworin's dance/theater work that premiered Friday night at the Charter Oak Temple Cultural Center, five bodies became the raw materials for this innovative choreographer's provocative and powerful concepts of form and movement. "Distant Voices" opened with a mysterious white light that beckoned the dancers. When it disappeared, there was a figure of a woman lying in its place. Writhing and contorting with primal movements, the four other figures seemed subhuman masses of form undergoing birth or awakening. Dworin's keen sense of physicality immediately engaged the senses.

In an integrated sequence of solos,

the five performers of Dworin's company, who developed "Distant Voices" with her, presented stunning visual images that defined archetypal aspects of existence. Dworin embodied her own aesthetic in a solo that evoked Eastern influences eloquently expressed. There was poetry even in the movements of her arms.

In contrast, Kelly James depicted a primitive, panther-like man who simultaneously menaced and fascinated with his raw, virile grace.

The feminine beauty of Kathy Borteck Gersten's movements, which assumed plastic shapes of pliability, created an emotional, maternal center to "Distant Voices" and gave it tender strength.

There also was wit in Tim Martin's dazzling solo. Using a wooden cube as a prop, he became an idiot savant who commanded the entire

performance area with his enigmatic smile, penetrating eyes and dynamic athleticism. A particularly poignant moment occurred when he ended and the other performers surrounded and touched him, as if to include him in their communality. The final solo by Lisa Matias Scrambana was a lyrical expression of pure motion that provided an effective choreographic contrast.

Throughout the one-hour work, the musical contributions of Julie Lyonn Lieberman and Paul Zimmermann offered a finely integrated aural palette of vocalises and exotic instrumental effects. The music and the movements of "Distant Voices" combined to create a fully realized, experimental work of appealing originality.

MetaArts will present "Distant Voices Coming Near" at the Charter Oak Temple Cultural Center tonight at 8 p.m. From 4 to 7 p.m., MetaArts also will sponsor "A Benefit Celebra-

tion" at Union Station. Information on both events may be obtained from the MetaArts office: 232-5525.