

Dance into adventure with MDT

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Guest Writer

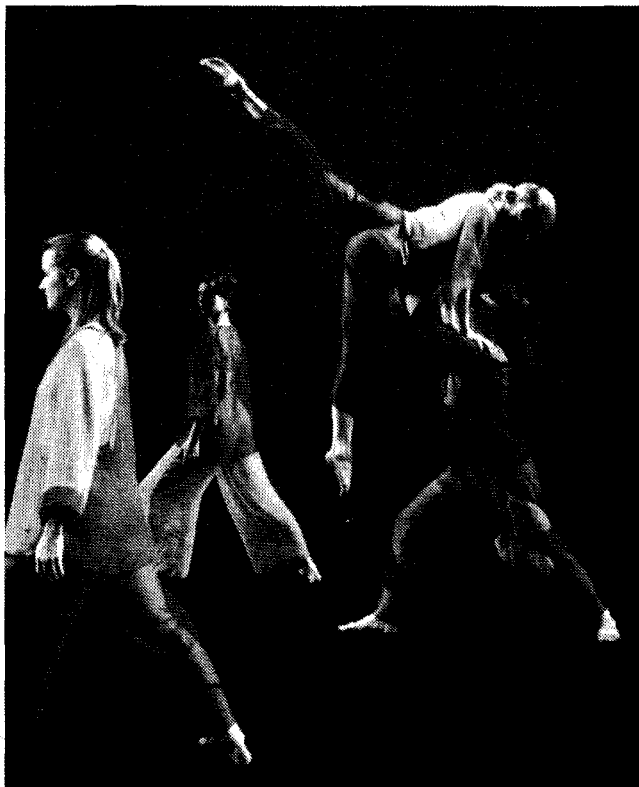
The first Meredith Dance concert of the year opened Thursday, Nov. 13. Entitled *Dance Works '97*, the program included a variety of pieces, ranging from David Beadle's rolling improvisational choreography to the precise, theatrical choreography of NC State's Robin Taylor.

Visiting dancers from Hollins College and NC State University shared the stage with Meredith's own. Hollins College performed "Their Silence is Silver, Their Speech is Gold," choreographed by Nathan Trice. Lightning, words, and music helped separate the piece into sections. Portraying women's struggle as the "second sex," the dance began in the past and brought us to the end of the dance. Introductory text set the piece at the beginning of women's existence, and by the end of the dance, the music had evolved into

a techno beat of current dance clubs. The dancers wore costumes that represented our foremothers' plain long dresses and starched shirts.

The movement in "Their Silence..." clearly showed the activities and emotions in women's lives. Although most of the movement was suggestive and not full-fledged pantomime, we could see chores done, cigarettes smoked, and pain felt. Many choices in the piece expressed agitation, including a movement motif of frantic hand vibration; at one point, the entire stage seemed to blur with frustration. This very active dance also spoke volumes in simple gestures like one dancer covering the mouth of an-

other. Such gestures illustrated an important theme in the piece: women's relationships with each other, a simultaneous source of strength and victim mentality. Eventually, the women did move together in a dance of rebellion. They lashed out, they fell, they got back up. Many audience members mentioned the haunting solo singing



MDT performed "Indra's Web" at Dance Works '97. The dance was choreographed by David Beadle. Photo by Steve Wilson

in this piece as their favorite part. The singer seemed to be crying...like many in the audience. Trice's impressively original choreography allowed for a fresh look into a subject that is sometimes cliché.

Our other visitors, from NC State, performed a very different but also successful piece. The dance consisted of two excerpts from a larger work entitled "Dedication." The second excerpt, "Dishwashing," resembled a Chaplin comedy sketch. The action revolved around many props of water basins, wash cloths, and chairs. Going so far as to stand barefoot in the water basins and continue to dance, the dancers remained straight faced, but the

audience did not!

Meredith College's own dancers held their own. One of the evening's highlights was "Something Other Than the Night," an entertaining piece choreographed by our guest artist, Peter DiMuro. The piece played with the elements of film noir detective mysteries. Like characters from "Dragnet" and "Randy Stone," the dancers played shady suspects, sexy night temptresses, and crime-solvers. Interspersed with text, the piece incorporated suspense through unfinished sentences, dramatic pauses, and mood music. Complete with flashlights and quirky body contortions, the dance was exciting while also incorporating some deeper themes like "nothing is a perfect match" and yin-yang relationship of light and dark, truth and mystery.

After six very different stories, the evening concluded with a piece performed by all the dancers, "Blind Dates and Dance Hall Stories." Directed by David Beadle, the piece was improvised in two sections: the first showed dancers with their eyes closed randomly placed in pairs (blind dates), the second turned the stage into a dance hall and reached a frenzied pitch, everyone trading partners and desperately searching for a good time. Slowly, the dancers and the audience were brought back to a calm as, one by one, each dancer was wearily passed down a line of bodies until everyone had staggered home.

For the most part, the pieces that made up *Dance Works* were accessible and enjoyable, so that no matter what style the audience preferred, there was something there for you.

Too little not too bad

TORY HOKE
Features Editor

Now, I've had a thing for Bill Murray ever since *Ghostbusters*. He was everything I wanted to be: smug, funny, and the voice of reason to a room full of Twinkie-talking yahoos. Even now, he's the envy of the male *Ghostbusters* graduates, the rest of which have crumbled to massive middle-aged weight gain and stinky *Honey, I Shrunk* and *My Stepmother Is* career decisions. (Kudosto Annie Potts and Sigourney Weaver for crushing the boys with success.) Murray's movie choices have kept him in the public consciousness but out of the public eye; to many, he is always Peter

Venkman, occasionally putting us on as a Scrooge or bumbling Bob. We like him better as the smart guy, and making him a fool—however successful—grates on our image of him. Murray's typecasting is the central problem of *The Man Who Knew Too Little*, which is, all told, not a bad flick.

Murray seems to have free rein as a Des Moines Blockbuster employee who takes off on his birthday to pay a surprise visit to his brother in England, who is hosting a dinner presentation for wealthy clients and immediately gets rid of his brother in an interactive play. Murray gets the wrong call to kick off his dramatic venture and is launched into a spy plot, mysteriously getting everything right while mysteriously never catching on that he's not in a play. Murray has so much fun with his role that it's hard not to enjoy it with him. When we meet him, he's holding up a line in an airport, which would be fiercely unfunny if he weren't such a nice guy about it. When he tries to wake up a dead guy he thinks is just acting, it's creepy and vile and really funny. When, for lack of a better place to put his pistol, he shoves it down the back of his pants, it's funny—something we would do if we thought it was a fake.

This is the main body of *Too Little's* humor—not knee-slapping, but funny. The knee-slappers are here, though, and include Peter Gallagher, as Murray's hot hot hot brother, ranting against the English police, and the climactic dance sequence which gets a

little freshness from Murray's approach. Joanne Whalley, as a call-girl with a blackmail scheme whose involvement with the spy stuff is unclear, is absolutely on target. The disgusted and disappointed look on her face when Murray prepares to make a "typical man" demand on her helps us believe she thinks he's a sleaze-o until, when his non-sleazy demand is actually made, her expression indicates it was what she expected. The very best achievement here is that Murray

doesn't realize he's really in danger at the end and has to rely on himself to pull through—the magic feather cliché. Murray is a total goon through the closing credits, where he gets to do a weird bit of

apparent improv which the entire movie could have stood to be more like.

Gallagher, the unconscious guy from *While You Were Sleeping* and Sky Masterson from Broadway's *Guys and Dolls*, is a riot, and it's a credit to Murray that he can hold his own against Gallagher's spectacular face. Gallagher's hair makes the model from the "You have the right" Pantene ads look like Marv Albert, and its level of muss directly correlates to his level of distress. He's more than just a pretty face, and yet less a Hollywood star than... yuk... Ethan Hawke. SoCal is so unfair.

Outside of Murray and Gallagher, the rest of the cast is unfamiliar to American eyes, and there is something to be said for actors you don't know. For example, watching *The English Patient*, I had a hard time getting past Ralph Fiennes' Nazi past from *Schindler's List*. *Too Little's* actors benefit enormously from getting to prove their character to the audience without the handicap of a history.

As a pseudo-spy movie, *The Man Who Knew Too Little* has a nationalist edge that not all the Bond flicks together gave England, arguing that a handful of plotting Cold War-veteran-gai jin are no match for one oblivious American shmoe. *Too Little* succeeds because the dumb luck and misunderstandings are so well-written, and because we believe the guy who accidentally convinced us he was Peter Venkman could accidentally convince everybody else he was a superspy.

Movie Review

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