

**BILL T. JONES / ARNIE ZANE & COMPANY**  
Continued from preceding page

"We are pedestrians dancing together. We're almost like a community square dance. We're having a good time together. There are no stars in this company. We root each other on. We have lots of fights, but we understand each other, and we understand why we're fighting. Bill asks us what we think. He pays attention to the dancers. He says we are all in this big experiment... It takes a lot of strength to stand up and say, 'This is who I am,' and I think the people in the company are behind him.")

J: "We spoke earlier about your desire not to be typed as a gay dance company. Would you elaborate on that?"

B: "This is not intended as a disclaimer because Arnie and I both know who we were, and we were very proud of who we were. In some ways, I still am that, I feel very much that he is always with me. That's why the company is still called Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane. It is an homage to what we built together. A lot of our activity in the last five years of Arnie's life was around our becoming more clear about differences as black and white men, and what we had in common, and understanding this was a political statement unto itself. And we were very proud to make such a statement."

"No, I'm not out in the streets or petitioning or

whatever, but I feel that every time my company appears, our politics are obvious on stage. There is of course no shame in the fact that many, though not necessarily all, of the men in my company are gay. The work I make is informed by art of every persuasion, and I would like it to be accessible to as many people as possible. So, no, I'm not backing away from any sense of identity with the gay community or a group like Black and White Men Together. It's just that in seeing our work, we are not, as one misinformed critic said, doing 'Art created through triumph over AIDS.' We've been making art for 17 years. So what was the art before? It sounds very opportunistic on my part to be using this tragedy to get press. I don't want to do that. I feel that I've always used the elements of my life to make my work, to give it vitality and authenticity. Being gay is just one of those elements. This [AIDS] is just another element, a very powerful one, but it shouldn't be represented disproportionately."

J: "Tell me about what you will be performing on June 14th."

B: "We'll be doing three pieces. The first is 'Absence.' It is dedicated to Arnie's parents. The poems set to music that are used in the piece may to our minds seem old-fashioned, but in the singing of them by Regine Crespin, there are eloquent and sobering, yet elevating feelings about loss, maybe even transcendence. It's quite morose; I don't find it maudlin. It's tragic in an operatic, stagey sort of way. It's not about naturalism. The sheets used in the last part are from Roosevelt Hospital where Arnie was. With a nurse's encouragement, we took a month's supply home with us when Arnie got out. But he died four days later."

"It's a very personal piece, but the central image is a man and a woman. That is not to shy away from a gay standpoint at all. For me, the exercise was to see if I could find the same resonance by using a form alien to my own personal life. Let's face it, loss in universal, love is universal, too. That's why I did it."

"The second piece will be 'D-Man in the Waters.' It's dedicated to a member of the company, Demian Acquavella, who is ill now. The epigraph for the work is the quote, 'You saw a way

to survive, and you were full of joy.' It speaks of the desire to get on with it."

At this point, unbeknownst to me, my recorder stopped. But one reviewer summed up "D-Man" saying: "It throbs with life, the will to survive; watching it, you can believe the nine dancers have healing power, so irresistible is the current of energy they create."

The third piece on the program will be "Soon," a duet for Bill and Bunty Matthias. It is set to Kurt Weill tunes sung by Lotte Lenya, Teresa Stratas and Bessie Smith. The title is from a Weill lyric in "Speak Low": "The curtain descends, everything ends too soon." Bill said that some have thought it a sad piece, but "I didn't think it was sad; it's filled with these grand feelings of one person for another."

The benefit performance will be June 14th in Reynolds Theatre, in the Bryan Center on Duke's West Campus. Tickets for the benefit are available through TASP, at (919) 286-4107; the Regulator Bookstore on Ninth Street in Durham; or Triangle Black and White Men Together. Or they may be purchased the night of the performance at the box office. If purchased at that time, please mention that they are for the TASP benefit. Triangle BWMT will be hosting a reception for the company after the performance. For information, please call (919) 490-1555.

**S.C. Group Honored with Civil Liberties Award**

A Greenville gay and lesbian organization has been awarded the S.C. American Civil Liberties Union's Modjeska Simkins endowment award for 1989.

The Palmetto Gay/Lesbian Association (PGLA) received the \$1,000 endowment and was honored at the annual ACLU banquet in Columbia, S.C. on May 13. The money will be used to further the cause of gay and lesbian civil rights," according to *Our Times*, the PGLA newsletter.

The award is given annually to South Carolina grassroots organizations that are championing civil liberties and equal opportunity for all citizens.

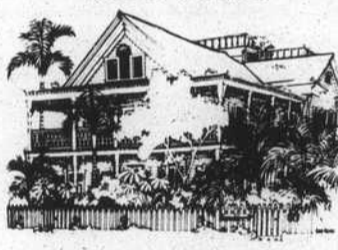
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"There is not one member of the gay community who hasn't benefited positively from the changes over the last 30 years. Yet we still hear, 'I don't like the gay community here very much.' To which we must respond, 'But my dear you are the gay community!'"

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The Front Page is dedicated to reporting the events and news of importance and interest to the individuals and organizations that make up the lesbian and gay communities, and to all others who share a concern for the full freedom, equal opportunity and right to expression of all people.

The aim of The Front Page is to represent the whole of the gay community, but that goal is only possible with readership participation. Those readers with the ability and willingness to write, share a responsibility for the growth and development of the gay community through this publication.

Whether you have experience in journalism or only desire to learn, your energy can contribute to your community paper. Anyone interested in writing or working on the paper: please call (919) 929-8181.

This publication encourages discussion of community concerns. Comments, criticisms, and information are always welcome. We encourage unsolicited contributions from our readers: all we require is that your work be thoughtful and sincere, that it make sense, and if it's typed and double-spaced, so much the better! (Sorry, but due to the tremendous volume of mail received, unsolicited works cannot be returned.)

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