Jewish Dance Troupe Reveals Dancers' 'Bare Essentials'

By Jennifer Vierra

Guests of "An Evening of Contemporary Jewish Dance/ Theatre" on May 3 were warned in advance that the program contained partial nudity and adult content.

A dance performance called "Anicca" by Eric Kupers, who will be assistant professor of dance in the Fall at Cal State East Bay and also the shows' curator, took an unexpected turn when dancers walked on stage in their underwear and proceeded to explore each other's different body

The audience found the first piece taken from "Annica" funny as laughs erupted from the crowd when two male dancers proceeded to roll on the floor and stick their fingers in each other's ears.

"Although the usual dance piece may be focused on different issues, it's usually centered around one body type. I wanted to challenge that," said Kupers. "I want to explore our relationships with our bodies and their impermanence, all bodies die, all bodies change. I believe a lot of body image has to do with a fear of change and death, people want to look younger, get rid of wrinkles, and control the exact shape of their body; and ultimately I don't think we have that kind of control."

Audience members of this one part to a year-long Jewish Cultural series walked into the University Theatre lobby and found themselves already watching the show.

The free performance started with a number in the lobby, continued in the theatre and included several Jewish choreographed works with a focus on how interpretive dance can tell many different stories, and mean many different things to many different people.

"The interesting thing about meaning, is it is very subjective," said Kupers. "I always want my meanings to be open to multiple interpretations, and evoke something. I want it to feel true to me in an intuitive way, and I believe if it feels true to me, I feel it will strike other people with truth as well.

The theater and dance/music

department Chair Thomas Hird felt that a focus on Jewish works was an important addition to the program at CSUEB.

'Cal State is a campus of diversity and the Jewish community of the East Bay has a long history and tradition," said Hird. "In recent decades Jewish artists, especially dancers, have made a significant contribution to the cultural life of the entire Bay Area."

The show's director Rhoda Kaufman, professor of theater and dance, introduced the show by using an old Yiddish saying and joked about how it could mean a few different things, much like the performances that were part of the show. She said that the purpose of the show was to open the audience up to possible meanings of art, dance, music, and theater.

The show had a wide range of music, dancing and colorful costumes. Some pieces were shown on a projector screen, while most were on done live on the stage. Even an excerpt from the current CSUEB play "Fools" by Neil Simon — who is also Jewish — was shown.

Kupers felt the show was a great success and all the artists had a great mix of different types of works. He added that the Jewish series will continue next year, and hopefully in the years

"I thought it was exciting to see these works brought together to celebrate the tradition of Jewish artistry in the East Bay. From that standpoint it certainly was a success," said Hird. "There is much for students here to learn about besides the knowledge they gain in the classroom. I think the event probably helped at least a few students to learn about participation in the wider culture of their community.

'Haunting' Leaves Moviegoers Running for the Door ... to Get Their Money Back

By Mario Sanchez

There is some truth to the saying, "They just don't make 'em like they used to.'

Rating:

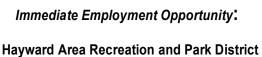
In fact, the only horrifying aspect of "An American Haunting" was the dearly departed funds used to purchase the ticket to see this big screen dribble. One can only hope that the careers of Donald Sutherland (John Bell) and Sissy Spacek (Lucy Bell) don't suffer irreparable harm for having participated in this cinematic travesty.

The plot centers on the "true" story of the Bell Witch, a poltergeist that tormented the Bell family in the small town of Adams, Tennessee in the early 1800s. Sandwiched between are a few present-day scenes which serve no purpose whatsoever.

The Bell Witch was reported to be the spirit of Kate Batts, a neighbor of the elder Bell who was involved with him in a dispute over the sale of slaves and/or land. According to Tennessee lore, she swore on her deathbed to get even. After she died — she, portrayed by Gaye Brown, is alive and well throughout the film — this is where the haunting was supposed to have begun.

Had Courtney Solomon ("Dungeons and Dragons" ... there's a keeper) kept with this storyline, this effort might not have reeked of predictability. Instead, the film is loaded with amateurish special effects including full moons on consecutive nights and a stormy rainfall that made it painfully obvious that the movie was filmed in a sound studio.

"Haunting" was also filled with the obligatory hallucina-



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tions, flying bed covers, mid-air suspensions, shattering windows, howling wolves and bi-

score. And let's not forget the

Also confusing were the unnecessary dream/nightmare sequences that left viewers unable to distinguish between reality and the otherworld. In addition to the revelation of who is or isn't responsible for the "curse," we are then left to wonder the true nature of the hauntings'

The film did have viewers on the edge of their seats, but demand a refund.

there really isn't much to praise about this two-and-a-half star mental bilge pump that is only comparable to grinding teeth.

ble-thumping preacher — all of which was overshadowed at times by Caine Davidson's dreary

ghostly figures in the mirror. Receiving the bulk of the supernatural abuse was Betsy Bell (Rachel Hurd-Wood) who, in a nutshell, was "witch" slapped for a great majority of the film. The only thing missing from her bed-ridden fits were the spinning head and the airborne split pea soup.

only right before they got up and headed to the box office to Save for the closing credits,

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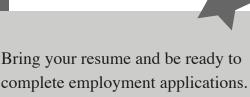
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