

startling in its graphic depiction while still dramatically sustained. Along with the other deleted sections of sex and sexual violence, that scene, say Sandler and Russell, will be retained in foreign market prints and home video releases.

Sandler welcomes the opportunity of tackling another gay subject in future projects ("if one comes up") but now ponders a technological horror story he'd like to write and produce ("I'd like to think of myself as a writer who produced his script, rather than just a hired hand"). As critical as he is optimistic, he remains a watchful observer of the gay presence on the screen. "I see a lot of sincere intentions but I haven't yet seen those characters that just happen to be gay. In *Tightrope* a gay guy asks Clint Eastwood how does he know he won't like it with a man if he's never tried it before. Eastwood says, 'Maybe I have.' On the surface it looks positive. Gee, isn't it terrific that he would say maybe he has! On the other hand, here's a guy who's seamy and perverse in his sex with women, and what he's doing is equating having sex with other men to kinky behavior like cuffing a woman. For every positive aspect there's a negative one. I care, and I'm concerned with our image as gay men and lesbians on the screen. As a writer, you try to shake people up and make them see what they're afraid to look at. You take risks. And when you do, you invite failure as well as success."

DANCE

QUINTET-ESSENTIAL: GAY MOVES IN 'NEXT WAVE' CHOREOGRAPHY

Somehow, without anybody noticing—well, nobody made a big deal of it—five of the six male choreographers in this season's prestigious Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music were "out" gay men.

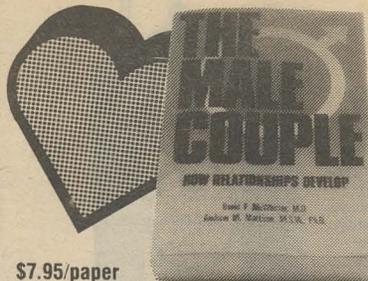
Remy Charlip's program, entitled "Ten Men," included a version of "12 Contra Dances," previously performed in the first Men Together gay dance concert in New York in 1982. Tim Miller's performance piece "Democracy in America" was a larger scaled, more overtly political work, in some ways similar to "Live Boys," a 1981 piece; cochoreographed with John Bernd about their relationship, "Boys" put them on the map as postmodernist choreographers. Bill T. Jones and Arnie Zane, who entered the international dance world as an acknowledged gay couple, presented an evening-length dance, "Secret Pastures." The last of the five—with the newest big-time reputation—is Mark Morris, who came out as a "gay artist" in an article in the widely read *Dance Magazine*.

Besides "Ten Men," "Democracy in America," "Secret Pastures" and three dances by the Mark Morris Dance Group,



Mark Morris combines a masculine stance with feminine grace in "O Rangasayee."

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the 1984 Next Wave Festival line-up included: "The Games," a collaboration between choreographers Meredith Monk and Ping Chong; an evening of choreography by former Martha Graham dancer Elisa Monte; music programs by Steve Reich and by The Penquin Cafe Orchestra; and a revival of the Robert Wilson/Philip Glass opera "Einstein on the Beach," with new choreography by Lucinda Childs.

Needless to say, dance in the Next Wave Festival was not as explicitly gay in that context as in the previous Glines-produced Gay American Arts Festivals, the Gay Performance Festival at P.S. 122 in New York's East Village or the Men Together concerts. Nor were all the Next Wave dances performed exclusively by males, as were those of the Men Dancing series of 1981 and 1982 at the Riverside Dance Festivals (in which Charlip, Morris and Zane danced). But these five men are major choreographers "on the cutting edge of the contemporary arts," as the Brooklyn series has been described. Their dances incorporate their individual gay sensibilities and their concerns of the moment — some gay, some not.

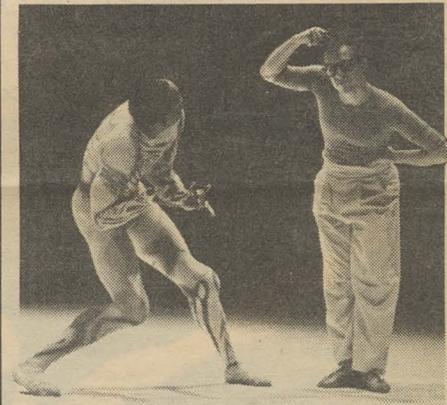
Charlip, whose reputation goes back to the Judson Church performances of the early '60s and who danced with Merce Cunningham for 11 years, presented the only program that might be characterized as being "gay." Charlip's dances are made to be performed by different numbers of dancers and/or different gender mixes. "12 Contra Dances," for example, has been performed by six men, 10 men, a male duet, a male/female duet, a mixed quartet and a mixed group of 10 dancers. It was reported that he intentionally chose an all-male cast for the Brooklyn performances and is open to "Ten Men" being interpreted as a gay statement — even though his choreography is not inherently hetero- or homosexual.

"Five Twos" was the romantic centerpiece of the evening. It contained five male/male duets — performers bare-chested, clad in loose white trousers, moving from a cool athleticism to a looser, lyric sensuousness to a faster, more staccato urgency. Hints of emotional involvement were visible in the movement, including such sexual postures as domination and submission. One

set of performers were so dissimilar in size that a mythic dimension to their relationship was suggested — David and Goliath, perhaps, or Jacob wrestling with his angel.

In 1981 Miller and Bernd described "Live Boys" as "a piece about pizza, sex, bialys, love, life in the East Village, boys, moving, talking, gesture, images." Miller's new "Democracy in America" is chock-a-block full of these everyday images; it's a sort of giant multilayered Jello salad filled with colorful bits and pieces of visualized Americana — not just the powdered wigs and buckskin leggings of history books, but also postwar icons of the '50s and '60s. "America" is about the dollar bill, waves of immigrants, rush-hour crowds, TV interviews and Washington monuments. It incorporates images of DAR ladies, cheerleaders, highway speeders, and political protesters wrapped in the red, white and blue — all pitched at us with a high-intensity spin. The tiny covered wagon, for instance, transports not a pioneer family but a little plugged-in Sony.

In "Democracy," which premiered shortly before the presidential election, Miller extended his ongoing examination of his gayness and his position in the cosmos, asking such questions as "Who



Sexy expedition: Bill Jones (left) and Arnie Zane in "Secret Pastures"

are my fellow Americans?" "What is the U.S.A.?" "How do I fit in?" and "What is democracy?" A footlight line-up of performers began to give some answers, stating their sexual preferences (one was "undecided") along with their hopes for the future in an uncertain world.

Jones and Zane's "Secret Pastures" was a sexy, stylish dance with lots of costumes by fashion designer Willi Smith, New-Wavish music by Peter Gordon's Love of Life Orchestra and sets by New York graffiti artist Keith Haring. The evening-length work cast Zane and Jones as characters echoing, respectively, Frankenstein and The Creature, Henry Higgins and Eliza, even Jane and Tarzan. With a largish group of associates they launch a "scientific expedition" to an uncharted island. But this dance is really like one of those musicals-within-movie-musicals that never make the sense they're supposed to — the production numbers are the point. And in "Secret Pastures" the Jones/Zane Company

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danced long and hard and admirably. A concentrated and lovely duet by Bill T. Jones and Arnie Zane early in the dance established their characters and appeared to reflect something of their off-stage life together. The pansexual orgy towards the end of the piece coincided



Romantic centerpiece: A scene from Remy Charlip's "Five Twos"

with a change into skin-tight and see-through Fredericks of Hollywood-type outfits — successfully shocking the capacity New York audience.

Morris had been something of a dancer's secret until his splashy nomination in December as a contender for the designation "Major Modern." Since he arrived in New York in 1976 he's danced with, among others, Eliot Feld, Lar Lubovitch, Twyla Tharp and Laura Dean. He's presented his own concerts every year since 1980, each one more ambitious — and more important — than the last.

As he's become increasingly well-known, Morris has mentioned his being gay, or having a male lover, in several of his interviews. His dances include some with all-women casts with strong women, all-male casts with tender men and some with all-too-rarely-seen same-sex partnering. He often includes a solo for himself. He has pretty features, abundant curly ringlets, and a strong, sturdy, very masculine body; the solos often play on this androgyny. At the Next Wave concert he fearfully performed "O Rangasayee," combining the conventions of Indian dance with his solid masculine stance and feminine gestural embellishments.

As shown in the Next Wave concerts, the range of their concerns — Remy's with romance and community, Miller's with politics, Jones and Zane's with style, Morris' with his art — these five choreographers provided a kind of sampler of the

focus of gayness in most gay men's lives. If this had been an intentional, rather than an accidental, gay festival, perhaps their choreography would have been more overtly sexual, more overtly homosexual. But perhaps not. Wasn't this an example of how open gay men can be part of the flow and fabric of society, expressing themselves honestly without necessarily wearing a pink triangle?

— Tom Brazil

FILM

NEAT FEAT

Judging by its gimmicky opening scene (a jowly Gene Kelly stands before a South Bronx graffiti-scape, narrating while break dancers pop it and lock it), *That's Dancing* would appear to be a fairly expedient, tasteless enterprise.

Fortunately, that initial contrivance isn't indicative of the whole, and what we get instead from this ambitious and belated follow-up to MGM's *That's Entertainment* and *That's Entertainment Part II* is an enormously entertaining, thoughtful anthology of some of the greatest dance performances ever put on film. Though the year is young, this is sure to measure up as one of the outstanding pleasure-giving experiences of 1985.

What's great about *That's Dancing* isn't just the vintage performances by Astaire and Kelly and Cagney, but the breadth and scope that writer/director Jack Haley Jr. has given the film. Unlike *TE* and *TE II*, which were basically MGM's acts of self-homage (albeit sweetly entertaining), *That's Dancing* is a genuinely democratic survey of screen dancing — as nearly comprehensive, I'd imagine, as 105 minutes could allow. Haley Jr., the man behind *TE* and *TE II*, takes *That's Dancing* far beyond the Hollywood studio mainstream into ballet, into newsreels depicting tap and jazz, Charleston and Latin, even into ethnographic films (Japanese, Hawaiian, American Indian, Balinese) to demonstrate that universal verity, "Feet need to feel the ground."

Haley and co-producer David Niven Jr.



All-male ensemble: Remy Charlip's company performs "12 Contra Dances."



PHOTOS BY TOM BRAZIL

Footlight parade: A scene from Tim Miller's "Democracy in America"

reputedly spent 18 months combing the world for the best dance footage available; the sleuthing truly shows on-screen. The earliest films depicting dance, which predate this century, are featured, along with brief clips of such ballet artists as Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn, Anna Pavlova (in a silent sequence from *The Dumb Girl of Portici!*), Vera Zorina (paired with a muscle-bound Charles Laskey for the 1939 film *On Your Toes*) and Jacques D'Amboise in *Carousel*.

Broken down into six segments, *That's Dancing* begins with Kelly narrating "The Berkeley Years" (including footage of Busby Berkeley choreographing his intricate, kaleidoscopic dance patterns) and moves to "The Great Stylists" (Sammy Davis Jr. on Astaire and Rogers and contemporaries), "Ballet" (narrated by Mikhail Baryshnikov), "The Golden Years" (Ray Bolger on the '40s and '50s, emphasis on MGM), "The Best of Broadway" (Liza Minnelli on stage-into-film musicals) and finally, "The Future," in which Kelly offers a cheery prognosis — not exactly justified — for the future of dance on film.

Kelly bases his optimism on the unavoidable Michael Jackson, whose

raucous "Beat It" music video is inexplicably offered as the bellwether of bright things to come. This irks me, first of all because Michael Peters isn't given credit for the choreography, but even more because Haley Jr., Kelley et al. choose to bestow on the overrated Jackson the same kind of recognition and credence that Astaire, Cagney and Baryshnikov receive. Wouldn't it be a lot more honest to say that Jackson, at 26, has potential but has yet to earn that kind of validation? A relook at his embarrassing Scarecrow performance in 1978's *The Wiz* might dispel some of the foolish deification that Jackson enjoys.

Purist that I am, I can't abide the lumping together of Michael Jackson, *Fame* and *Flashdance* with the likes of Fred Astaire. Hasn't anyone noticed that the kind of nervous cutting and fancy camera work displayed in recent filmed dance and in music videos are actually antiperformance? Who can savor and appreciate a dancer's art if the filmmaker has no confidence in the audience's attention span and constantly cuts away from the dancer to pointless reaction shots and extraneous business?

It seems that the example given by Astaire has been lost, and that today's filmmakers are determined to trivialize dancing while pretending to celebrate it. Here's a quote from Sammy Davis Jr.'s narration: "Astaire insisted that [all his dance numbers] be photographed with as little editing or changes in the camera angles as possible, and that the dancers always be shown in full figure, from head to toe." (Bravo, Fred!) "In doing so," Davis continues, "he almost single-handedly revamped and restyled the movie musical."

Will the current practitioners of movie musicals eventually complete the cycle and return to the standards laid down by Astaire? If not, we'll have to content ourselves with vintage films — and with this superb new dance anthology. Not such a grim alternative, at that.

The notion that suffering and misery are ennobling experiences — especially if the sufferers pay their dues in a rural