

DANCE

A happy day of dance at 'Boundary Waters'

By Llewellyn Crain

Daily News Dance Critic

The beach was beautiful Saturday.

The sun shone in a cloudless sky, the blue-green sea sparkled invitingly. Ocean Park in Santa Monica wasn't too crowded and people seemed friendly. A perfect summer day in Southern California.

Choreographer Mary Jane Eisenberg thought so, too.

So she gathered Shale, her seven-member company, and Bruce Fowler's Trombone Band and created "Boundary Waters,"

a dance for "an afternoon at the seashore."

"Boundary Waters" isn't the best dance ever made.

In fact, if Eisenberg were to remove it from its seaside environment and put it on a stage, the choreography probably wouldn't hold up.

But it did manage to entertain both dance fans and those who never before had seen a modern dance, which in itself is no mean feat.

The piece is about the rituals of the sea.

Dressed in black bathing attire and sunglasses, the dancers

breathed motion into the deep and compelling activities of seaside life.

They pantomimed sailing and surfing; they hauled in imaginary nets that teemed with sea life.

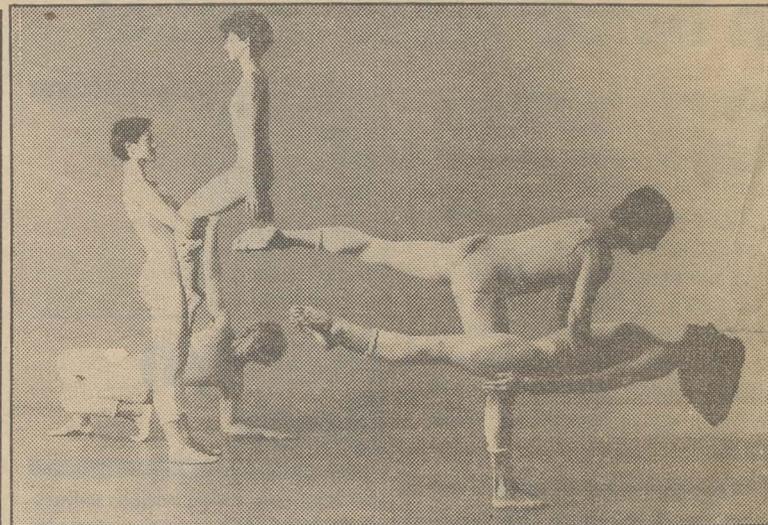
Meanwhile, the dance attracted hundreds of onlookers all happy to share in the prevailing joyousness so fitting to an afternoon at the beach.

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Let's set the record straight: Mark Morris is not a particularly innovative choreographer.

He is traditional — extremely traditional.

He's corny, and flamboyant,



The 11-member Mark Morris Dance Group appeared Saturday night at California State University, Long Beach.

and a brilliant craftsman and mesmerizing performer.

But his work appears to be missing an essential ingredient of modern dance: that peculiar need both to seek new expressions and be true to a powerful inner vision.

Morris, who appeared with his 11-member troupe at California State University, Long Beach, Saturday night, is considered by some to be the next great modern dance choreographer.

Yet he demonstrated little evidence of true creative genius.

But Morris seems to have no intention of reaching people on profound level.

Morris loves to surprise by juxtaposing the unexpected with the expected.

"One Charming Night," a duet for Morris and Teri Weksler, was

refreshingly and excitingly played with both balletic and modern dance traditions.

Morris also confounded expectations in his concert programming.

The evening opened with the traditional "Shepherd on the Rock," in which three ill-matched couples leaped together like country lads and lasses to music by Franz Schubert.

After that came "Dogtown." Here, Yoko Ono provided the music for seven dancers dressed in super-hero costumes who paraded and posed like animals.

While the first was the work of a concerned traditionalist, and the other that of a rebellious youth, neither was inspired or artful enough to garner the intended response.