

TheConcordian

MARCH 27, 1998

A FORUM FOR ISSUES FACING THE CONCORDIA COMMUNITY

VOLUME 8, NUMBER 24

March 27, 1998

TheConcordian ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT 11

'Stepping Out' on the main stage

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TheConcordian

"Stepping Out," Concordia Theatre's final main stage production of the season, is a show about eight adult dance students, a teacher, a piano player and what they experience during a tap class in London. The characters, who come from all different walks of life, explore their daily lives and search for a little fun, meaning and time for themselves in these dance classes.

Choreographer Eddie Gasper comments that the insecurities and experiences of the characters are those of everyday people he encounters at his dance studio. This expression of everyday life and the stories of real people continue the theme from this year's other theatre productions, including "Godspell," "Caucasian Chalk Circle" and "Baltimore Waltz."

"This is Concordia's 'Full Monty,'" said director Jim Cermak. "People are looking for more self-esteem and more than just a paycheck. They are searching for something more than a 9 to 5 job and coming home only to watch TV. People are looking for some fun and excitement."

Eric Harrison, who plays the part of Jeffrey, is the only male in the production. "It's really weird being the only guy in the show," said Harrison. "It's not that big of a deal, but there is this female bonding thing that I can't be a part of, can't relate to."

Jeffrey is also quite shy, something Harrison doesn't consider himself to be. "I'm playing the most unlike me character I will ever play in my life," Harrison said.

Becky Rizzio also felt the differences between

herself and the character she portrays. Cermak, however, noticed the similarities when he cast the show — the little gestures that tied the performer to the character he envisioned. It was essential for the performers to bring parts of themselves to their character, but an understanding of the characters and their backgrounds was also important. The cast developed the characters, their feelings and emotions and several other details of the play. Cermak says this opportunity will be a part of his regimen from now on.

Another obstacle the cast of "Stepping Out" had to tackle was the knowledge of and ability to tap dance. The cast's experience ranged from no dancing training to Karina Janovsky's 14 years of tap, ballet and jazz experience. Janovsky plays the part of the dance instructor and helped with the overall appearance of the show in several ways. She describes it as a leadership role in helping the cast pick up the tap techniques and helping to keep the moves sharp.

"I have a good eye for polishing and picking up on the little things that keep a performance looking sharp," Janovsky said. This is Janovsky's last performance at Concordia, and the help she contributed in various areas is appreciated by everyone, according to others involved in the play.

"[Janovsky] has been doing extremely well with it, putting wheels on the chairs and making sure everything is in order," Cermak said.

Rizzio agreed that Janovsky is important to the production. "Karina's experience has led us in a positive, productive way," she said.

Gasper also commented on Janovsky's leadership and the entire cast's ability to pick up or



Photo by Karie Baker

Cast members "Stepping Out" the door.

relearn the tap skills. "They accomplished so much in such a short period of time. You'd think they've been tapping for years, and I love them," Gasper said. "I'm thrilled working with the students because they are very open and anxious to do their best. It's a pleasure to come to rehearsal."

"Stepping Out" will be playing at 8 p.m. on April 2 through 4 and at 2:30 p.m. April 5 in Frances Frazier Comstock Theatre. Tickets may be obtained at the Concordia Theatre Box Office.

FYI

Women's History

Judy Lutter, key speaker for Women's History Month, will address "A Woman's Dilemma: Finding the Balance to Enhance Mental and Physical Health," at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday March 31, in Christiansen Recital Hall, Hvidsten Hall of Music. Lutter is the author of "The Bodywise Woman" and "Of Heroes, Hopes, and Level Playing Fields." She is the president of the Melpomene Institute for Women's Health Research in St. Paul. This event is free and open to the public.

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