

News from Bennington College

Bennington, Vermont 05201

Public Relations Office

Telephone: 802 442 5401

RELEASE: IMMEDIATELY

BENNINGTON, Vt. -- Bennington College has announced an intensive two-week period of guest residencies in dance, video and film which will commemorate the Judson Church movement of artistic activity in New York in the 1960s.

The public will be welcome to attend performances, workshops and discussions on the Bennington campus between April 9 and 19.

The "Judson Project" was conceived by Bennington faculty members Wendy Perron and Tony Carruthers, both as part of their course work and as a documentation of the Judson Dance Theatre from 1962 to 1966, as well as a follow-up of current work by Judson participants.

Judson Memorial Church was a major center of artistic ferment in the early 1960s. The series of events held there radically expanded the perception of dance for both artist and audience. Now, almost 20 years later, the Judson movement is widely recognized as a crucial era in performance history.

Artists of all disciplines took part in the Judson experiments, but one interest they all shared was the crossing of boundaries among the several arts-- movement, sound, and visual material. They redefined these media, in effect, infusing the very phenomenon of performance with new life.

Key people from the Judson era will be at Bennington in April for showings, performances, workshops and discussions. They include Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton,

Trisha Brown and others who are doing related work. Their residencies on the campus will also signal the start of an extensive project that includes a series of videotaped interviews and performances by the Judson participants, and a major photography exhibit to be held both at Bennington and in New York City. Extensive use of the camera for documentation and image-making was an intrinsic aspect of the work at Judson and has become an integral part of the process of seeing dance. Photographers Peter Moore and Babette Mangolte will be in residence during the April performances.

The schedule of events is as follows:

- April 9, 9 p.m. in the Martha Hill Dance Theatre: a public videotaping with Steve Paxton, Lisa Nelson and Steve Christiansen.
- April 10, 8 p.m. in Room E320 of the Visual Arts and Performing Arts Center: a discussion on the Judson era with Trisha Brown and Steve Paxton.
- April 11, 8:30 p.m. in the Martha Hill Dance Theatre: performance by Trisha Brown.
- April 16, 8 p.m. in Tishman Lecture Hall: film showing, Yvonne Rainer, "Journeys from Berlin/1971" (made in 1979).
- April 17, 4:15 p.m. in Tishman Lecture Hall: film showing "Lives of Performers" (1972) followed by discussion with Rainer and camera person Babette Mangolte.
- April 18, 8 p.m. in Tishman Lecture Hall: film showing, Yvonne Rainer, "Journey from Berlin/1971."
- April 19, 2 p.m. in Newman Court, Visual Arts and Performing Arts Center, video showing of work of Judith Dunn.

The schedule is subject to change, and further or updated information may be obtained by calling Ron Dabney at Bennington (802) 442-5401, Extension 270. All of the above events are free of charge.

Brief sketches of the key Judson personalities:

Trisha Brown tours the U.S. and Europe extensively with her company. Since her early "equipment pieces" after her work at Judson Church to her current clear-movement pieces, she has been widely acclaimed as an architect of movement. In her most recent work, "Glacial Decoy," she collaborated with Robert Rauschenberg on set design and costumes.

Steve Christiansen is a videographer who has directed and produced many video programs on the West Coast, including ongoing documentation of Contact Improvisation and a children's special called "It's the Pickle Family Circus" (1978). He has exhibited his video work at Portland Art Museum, Coos Bay Art Museum and the Optic Nerve in San Francisco.

Judith Dunn, a pivotal member of Judson Dance Theatre, danced with Merce Cunningham from 1958 to 1963. She joined the Bennington College dance faculty in 1968. She has done pioneer work in improvisation and has worked closely with Bill Dixon, founder of the Black Music Division at Bennington.

Babette Mangolte is a photographer and filmmaker involved in experimental performance. She has worked closely with Yvonne Rainer and is the camera person for "Lives of Performers" (1972) and "Film about a Woman Who..." (1972). Her own films include "What Maisie Knew" (1975), "The camera: je" or "La camera: I" (1977), and "There? Where?" (1979). Her photographs of Robert Wilson, Richard Foreman and other New York artists appear in numerous publications and books on performance.

Peter Moore is senior editor of Modern Photography magazine and photographer and artistic director of the Archives of Experimental Art. He was part of the Fluxus and Judson movements, and has had many one-man and group exhibitions in both the U.S. and Europe. He has taught photography at art schools and in private studios.

Lisa Nelson is producer of video programs for cable TV in Vermont and is co-editor of Contact Quarterly. She has designed courses in dance/video for colleges in the U.S., England and France, and has performed with Daniel Nagrin, Grand Union and independently.

Steve Paxton, a member of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company from 1961 to 1964, was part of the original Judson group in 1962. He was also a founding member of the Grand Union in 1970. The initiator of Contact Improvisation, a duet form of art-sport, Paxton is a contributing editor of Contact Quarterly. Since 1972, in addition to his extensive dance activities, he has been making video tapes and installations, some of which are collaborations with Lisa Nelson and/or Steve Christiansen.

Yvonne Rainer co-founded Judson Dance Theatre in 1972. Between 1962 and 1975 she presented her choreographic work throughout the U.S. and Europe, notably on Broadway in 1969 and at the Festival d'Automne in Paris in 1972. Her most recent film is "Journeys from Berlin/1971."

The April residencies are the beginning of an extensive project that includes a series of videotaped interviews or performances by Judson participants and a major photography exhibit to be held both at Bennington and in New York City.