

Synergy Uses Media In Art Context

"Charlie Noble" was stunning. Seldom is such an eerie, macabre idea portrayed with such force and conviction. Because the media, involved (video tape, film, live music, dance) were subservient to a powerful theme, they added tremendous dimensions to the theater experience without seeming superfluous.

Miss White's essential theater seems the most promising approach to the concept of synergy. At the root of its success was the sensitive and original use of multiple media to express a well-conceived artistic idea.

RONNI KOMAROW, BONNIE PARR PHILIPSON AND ELLEN THOMPSON

Theoretically we are in a time when there is no longer a clear boundary between painting and sculpture, sculpture and theatre, art and the audience. Even if ten years ago I could have said artistic expression in the form of a three-dimensional object is called sculpture - omitting the surrounding space, the light, the sound, the action, the audience - I certainly would not do that today, and especially not with a production such as "Project Synergy".

I like the idea of "Project Synergy", its synthesis of theatre, dance, music, film and sculpture; art and technology if you will. The combinations are endless, the possibilities are fascinating and the creators of synergy are into it.

As the audience arrived, three dancers in overalls were onstage playing with cardboard cylinders, discussing their construction with front-row spectators. At certain times they moved offstage, giving the impression that the work was done, and the process of sharing the creation ready to begin.

A journey into the creative process, "Pipe Dreams" employed dancers and cylinders to construct a sculpture parallel to one flying upstage. Continuing their playful exploring, Susan Hall Lewis, Barbara Culbertson and Sharon Flack displayed humor, skill and enjoyment in dancing.

Scriba Whitmore's stage presence and eerie grace highlighted "One God, Two Me, Three You and Four Dimensions." Whitmore, searching for the Idea in Life, contends with a shadowy, mysterious God still in the process of creating the universe. Dancing and technical effects together produced strong images of discovery, of doors opening and eggs cracking open. One projection onto the dome effectively transformed the entire auditorium into an eggshell.

The third piece by Suzanne White, "The Death of Charlie Nobel", was the most powerful for me. Stark, tragic images of drowning and death were presented through film, dance, pantomime, video, props and music. An incredible blend of humor and desperation, this was intense and disturbing theatre. Jan Bufkin's portrayal of Sylvia dying would wake a stone heart.

This being more total theatre than pure dance, technique was less important than the effect of expressive movement as a tool for building impressions upon images. It was the combination of art forms involved that was able to build on the emotions with rich imagery at different sensory levels.

Mixed Media: A Mixed Bag

