



Dendy drums up another winning ADF number at Golden Belt

By Cliff Bellamy : The Herald-Sun
cbellamy@heraldsun.com
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DURHAM -- Room 350 on the top floor of Building 2 of Golden Belt soon will be renovated to make way for The Cotton Room at Golden Belt. When it opens, that events facility will make use of the historic features of the 11,000-square-foot space, including the old pulleys from its days as a factory that made bags.

Friday night, the second site-specific work by choreographer Mark Dendy, performed by students at the American Dance Festival, also took full advantage of Golden Belt's space and history.

The piece was called simply "Golden Belt." Many of the dancers' moves, and the soundtrack by composer Lonnie Poupard Jr., evoked at times the days when cotton and tobacco were king in Durham.

The dancers, dressed in various kinds of attire, wore heavy gloves. There was a practical reason for this attire, because the dancers frequently moved around the exposed wood beams.

Site-specific works are meant to take dance out of the traditional theater. The audience got to see the dancers up close. Dendy instructed the packed crowd to move counterclockwise around the perimeter of the center of this space to observe the dance. Dendy told the audience that at times they would have to "be prepared for a little interaction" to allow dancers move to another part of the room.

The music score, in addition to train sounds, hammering and other factory sounds, also included samples from various musicians. It started with blues singer Lightnin' Hopkins singing "Hello, Central," evoking the days when blues musicians played in Durham's factory district. Later the audience heard a clip of Chet Baker singing "Embraceable You." During this segment, two dancers gave a performance resembling a ballroom dance. It drew the first shouts of approval and a few claps.

In another segment, dancers moved to "16 Tons," after which the women dancers, emulating textile workers, chanted rhythmically. At other times, the troupe danced in swing dance style. Music ranged from Hank Williams to Roger Miller to a sax and string quartet to classical guitar music.

The performance drew loud applause and stomps, implying a request for an encore.

Mike and Ashleigh Raabe of Durham gave the performance thumbs up. Mike Raabe praised the event for its "chocolate, strawberries, champagne and dancing." Both came for other Third Friday Durham events going on downtown, and he said the event made for a "much more interesting Friday night than renting a movie."

Barbara Hindenach said the use of the Golden Belt space was "inspirational. People seem to be doing different

things with this space."

Henry Dendy, the choreographer's father, said, "It was great," and commented that his son was interested in dance from "the time he was born almost."

In June, ADF dancers performed another of choreographer Dendy's site-specific works, titled "Would you please restate your answer in the form of a question?" That work commemorated the festival's first night ever performing in the new Durham Performing Arts Center.

More than 50 performers danced on all levels of the DPAC lobby, and on the outside plaza area, before the evening's main event in the auditorium. Some of the dancers welcomed visitors to a lounge, wearing masks representing President and Michele Obama, Albert Einstein, Abraham Lincoln and others. Still other dancers mingled in the audience while wearing mirror masks.

Dendy, a New York-based dance and theater choreographer, led the Mark Dendy Dance and Theater company from 1983-2000. He studied at the American Dance Festival, and has been a frequent performer at the festival. Last season, he created a new world premiere work for the festival's 75th season.



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