

Nikolais Dance Theatre

JOHN F. KENNEDY THEATRE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
NOVEMBER 4, 5, 6, 7, 1970

KAUAI WAR MEMORIAL CONVENTION HALL
NOVEMBER 9

BALDWIN HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
NOVEMBER 11

HILO HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
NOVEMBER 13

Nikolais Dance Theatre

Staging, choreography, costumes, sound score, and lighting design by Alwin Nikolais

Kennedy Theatre - November 4 and 5

DIVERTISSEMENT

1. Quintet from "Sanctum" (1964)
2. Trio from "Vaudville" (1965)
3. Group dance from "Sanctum" (1964)

Intermission

STRUCTURES

Commissioned by the Chimera Foundation for the Dance—premiered at City Center Theatre, New York, May 1970

Intermission

TENT

Prologue and five sections.

Commissioned by the University of Southern Florida with the assistance of the Rockefeller Foundation—premiered June 1968.

Kennedy Theatre - November 6 and 7

DIVERTISSEMENT

1. Quintet from "Sanctum" (1964)
2. Trio from "Vaudville" (1965)
3. Group dance from "Sanctum" (1964)

Intermission

ECHO

Commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts—premiered at City Center Theatre, New York, December 1969.

Intermission

TOWER

Tower is the third act of the theatre piece called "Vaudville of the Elements"—
Commissioned by the Walker Art Center—premiered at Tyrone Guthrie Theater, December 1965.

Kauai, Maui, Hilo Program

DIVERTISSEMENT

1. Quintet from "Sanctum" (1964)
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Intermission

ECHO

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Intermission

STRUCTURES

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Members of the Nikolais Performing Company

TANDY BEAL, BOB BESWICK, RICK BILES, EMERY HERMANS,
THEA MARTINEZ, SUZANNE McDERMAID, CLAUDIA MELROSE,
GERALD OTTE, WANDA PRUSKA, ROBERT SOLOMON

ABOUT NIKOLAIS

Alwin Nikolais was born in a small Connecticut town of German and Russian parents. He studied music at an early age, and at 16 his skill as an organist-pianist secured for him a position at the Westport movie house accompanying silent films. He spent two years at this job improvising to gestures, moods and actions, a talent which he used to such great effect in his later professional life.

When still a young man, Nikolais attended a performance by the renowned German dancer, Mary Wigman. Profoundly impressed by the combined rhythm of movement and sound in her presentation, he turned to the career he has pursued ever since, first as a dancer, then as a choreographer. He has studied and worked with every devotee of the emerging American modern dance scene.

In 1948 he began developing and teaching his unique contemporary style at the Henry Street Playhouse in New York. For some twenty years now, Nikolais has been an innovative force in the use of multi-media to create a total theatre, and the result is drama that engages the sensory experiences of the spectator. His theatre is one of dynamics where dramatic meaning is found in form. He builds drama through molding abstractions of sound, time, shape, color, light and motion. When all these elements are placed on the stage in co-equal interaction and become the script and the actors, a Nikolais dance theatre results.

Nationally and internationally, Nikolais and his company are in enormous demand. This season, the Nikolais Dance Company will tour the U. S. for 15 weeks, present a New York season, and in April begin a four-month tour of Asia and Europe.

ABOUT THE CAST

Three are veterans of Nikolais United States and European Tours

EMERY HERMANS—Born in Seattle and formerly an architect, studied dance with Nikolais in New York. He has since taught as well as performed his own work with Sara Shelton of the Murray Louis Company.

WANDA PRUSKA—Studied ballet and modern dance in Poland before coming to New York. She was recently the subject of a feature article in "America" magazine which followed her in performances from London to Salt Lake City in preparing the story.

ROBERT SOLOMON—From the Bronx, studied architecture and construction technology at New York City Tech. He began his studies with Nikolais at the age of 19. Robert has performed, taught and choreographed in both New York and California.

Three are in their second season with the Nikolais Company

ROBERT BESWICK—First studied with Nikolais and then joined the company after performing with the Repertory Dance Theater of Utah and the Anna Sokolow Dance Company. He graduated from the University of Utah and has taught in Oklahoma and California.

CLAUDIA MELROSE—Is a dance major from the University of Wisconsin where she taught this past summer. She has studied with Mr. Nikolais for many years and is also the "regisseur" of the company.

GERALD OTTE—Graduated from the University of Colorado. He chooses to dance as he "feels it is the only theatre of today." He says the rest of his life consists of opera, a concert grand piano and living in New York.

Four joined the company this season

TANDY BEAL—Has toured the country and performed in an off-Broadway show with her actor parents, John Beal and Helen Craig. She speaks fluent Indonesian; served a stint as a science fiction illustrator and has studied witchcraft all her life. She began her dancing career with Nikolais at the age of 16.

RICK BILES—Graduated in architecture from Illinois Institute of Technology and after working as an architect for three years began studying ballet. He became a graduate in modern dance at the University of Wisconsin before studying with Nikolais and joining the company.

SUZANNE McDERMAID—Is from Southern California. After many years of ballet study, she graduated in modern dance from UCLA where she later taught and performed her choreography with the UCLA Dance Company. From California she went to New York to study dance with Murray Louis and Alwin Nikolais.

THEA MARTINEZ—Was born on New York's Lower East Side and studied with Louis and Nikolais from very early childhood. She went to them at first because "they were there," but afterwards found public school inadequate compared to the excitement of the dance field. Now having joined the company, she continues her career.

HISTORICAL NOTES

In 1948 at the Henry Street Playhouse on the Lower Side of New York, Alwin Nikolais started a dance venture that brought about historical consequences in the arts. His philosophy about dance, as a teacher, as well as his unique creative genius, impressed itself with great force upon the international dance scene. The "Playhouse" became synonymous with a "new school of thought about dance." The Henry Street Settlement, a neighborhood-oriented facility, was the guiding parent of the Playhouse. It was a beautiful little theatre, designed in the Adam style, with two small studios, scene dock and a couple of offices. In 1948 the "Playhouse" was buried in the messy poverty ridden street of the Lower East Side ghetto.

At that time, although the poverty of the area was in full evidence, it also had the kaleidoscopic and bizarre character of an international stewpot. The streets were peopled with colorful characters of the most varied groups and religious sects. In this setting as head of the dance department and later the Playhouse's co-director, Nikolais established a small company which included dancers who are now distinguished names in the field. Among these is Murray Louis, one of the finest male dancers and choreographers of our day and who now with Nikolais has formed the new Louis-Nikolais Dance Theatre Lab.

It was the historical development of the arts in the United States, as well as Nikolais' rise to international repute that recently made a break with the Playhouse essential. His extensive tours in Europe and the United States made a steady directorial post at the Playhouse impossible. The school, the Nikolais Dance Theatre and the Louis Dance Company all had to find other headquarters.

In the early summer of 1970, a large building complex became available in midtown Manhattan. Carpenters, plumbers, architects, electricians and Nikolais labored over what had been a Presbyterian Church and recreation center to create a totally new and unique environment.

The complex is the home of the Nikolais Dance Theatre, the Murray Louis Dance Company as well as being the base of the Louis-Nikolais Dance Theatre Lab, a professional school of dance with over 200 students from all over the world. The Lab will also house a 200-seat experimental theatre that will produce works of young choreographers.

Other performing units will eventually be housed at the center, which is called "The Space," and is administered by The Space Foundation, Inc. Those who have visited "The Space" in the short time it has been open have sensed the excitement and adventure that accompanies the opening of a new chapter in the history of the contemporary performing arts.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Staff for Mr. Nikolais

Stage Manager	Ruth Grauert
Technical Director	George Gracey
Sound Engineer	Stephen Vedro
Costume Director	Frank Garcia
Company Managing Director	Murray Farr

The Nikolais Dance Theatre, along with the Murray Louis Dance Company and the Louis-Nikolais Dance Theatre Lab are components of the Chimera Foundation for Dance. Betty Young is the Administrative Director.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mr. Philip Heron of the Department of Drama and Theatre and his staff for technical assistance

Kauai—Mr. Jerome Hew of Kapaa Neighborhood Center for Kauai coordination

Maui—Mr. Walter Ouye of Maui Community College for Maui coordination

Hilo—Mrs. Dorothy S. Thompson of Hawaii County Department of Parks and recreation for Hilo coordination

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NOTICE:

Smoking is not permitted in the auditorium, nor may photographs or recordings be made during the performance.