

NEW JERSEY

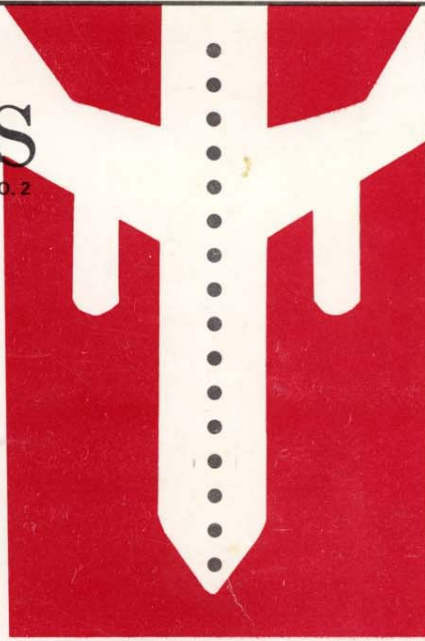
# Music & Arts

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As her work gains wider exposure Jan Wodynski, dancer and choreographer, intensifies her exploration of dance as an art form.

"I'm fascinated by dance and struck by its similarity to film. The choreographer, like the director, must establish an atmosphere and evoke feelings. And in the final stages, editing - crucial to both media - determines the impact and continuity of the finished work."

Ms. Wodynski's ever-expanding philosophy of dance includes a surprisingly traditional assessment of the audience-performer relationship.

"The tenor of the times is to dance for self-gratification and simply to ignore the audience. With that attitude, you might as well dance in a closet. I feel strongly that an artist should make an aesthetic choice *prior* to a performance and not subject an audience to experimentation on stage. Barbara Doerffer, Professor of Dance at Jersey City State College and an inspiration to us all, put it so succinctly: 'Dance is a performing art.'"

Jan Wodynski's professional credentials include appearances with Joy Boutillier, Mimi Gerrard and Art Bauman, as well as a five year association with the Charles Weidman Dance Theater and intensive study with Nikolais-Louis.

Presently, she is on the staff of her alma mater, Jersey City State College, coordinating a program which integrates art and movement into elementary school curriculum.

Since the Jan Wodynski Dance Company was formed in 1969, the ensemble has performed regularly on campus and at the Clark Center and YM-YWHA of Metropolitan New Jersey in West Orange. As Ms. Wodynski has discovered, arranging bookings can be an enlightening experience.

"The larger houses in New Jersey tend to overlook local talent and import name performers so we've been forced to use New York City as a proving ground. Successful appearances at the American Theater Lab, the Cubiculo and the Video Exchange have done a lot to bolster our image and we're optimistic about future engagements here in our home state," New Jersey theatre managers, take note.

Jan's husband, Mike, the Director of Color Television Services at JCSC, is a charter member of the dance troupe. Working together, the Wodynski's have incorporated film and electronic music into the company's repertoire. One of their earliest collaborations, *Koreotronics*, best exemplifies this harmonious marriage of art and technology. The Wodynski's regard the piece as "a very light polemic on



"Koreotronics"

future societies, a science-fiction fantasy rooted in the dissonance of city living and urban sounds." Clever staging synthesizes audio and visual elements to produce a whimsical glimpse of some frenetic Brave New World. The dancers, clad in scant, silvery space garb, add a unique dimension to the performance by providing their own music on lucite sound tubes engineered by Mike Wodynski. The overall effect is dazzling!

In the equally dramatic *Inspiration*, the dancers don gas masks to achieve a primitive, animal-like quality. *Inspiration* grew out of improvisational sessions and evolved gradually over a two year period. As it solidified, Jan encouraged the dancers to retain their individuality confident that the dynamics of their interrelationships would vitalize the finished work.

The Wodynski's treated us to a

private screening of *Contours*, a 1970 composition which they recently video taped. It is a dancy, almost traditional piece which has become a troupe favorite. The use of flowing costumes and repeated curved patterns departs markedly from its unconventional predecessors, demonstrating the Wodynski scope.

The breadth of her style was revealed in a mini-season presented at the American Theater Lab last April.

"We called our retrospective *The Jan Wodynski Dance Theatre in Motion*. It was a tremendous undertaking - six performances tracing our progress from 1969 to the present. I'm not really an eclectic yet I wanted to underscore our versatility. *Koreotronics* was on the verge of becoming our signature piece and that's something I want to avoid. It's too soon to be stereotyped, to be locked into one mode of performing." &