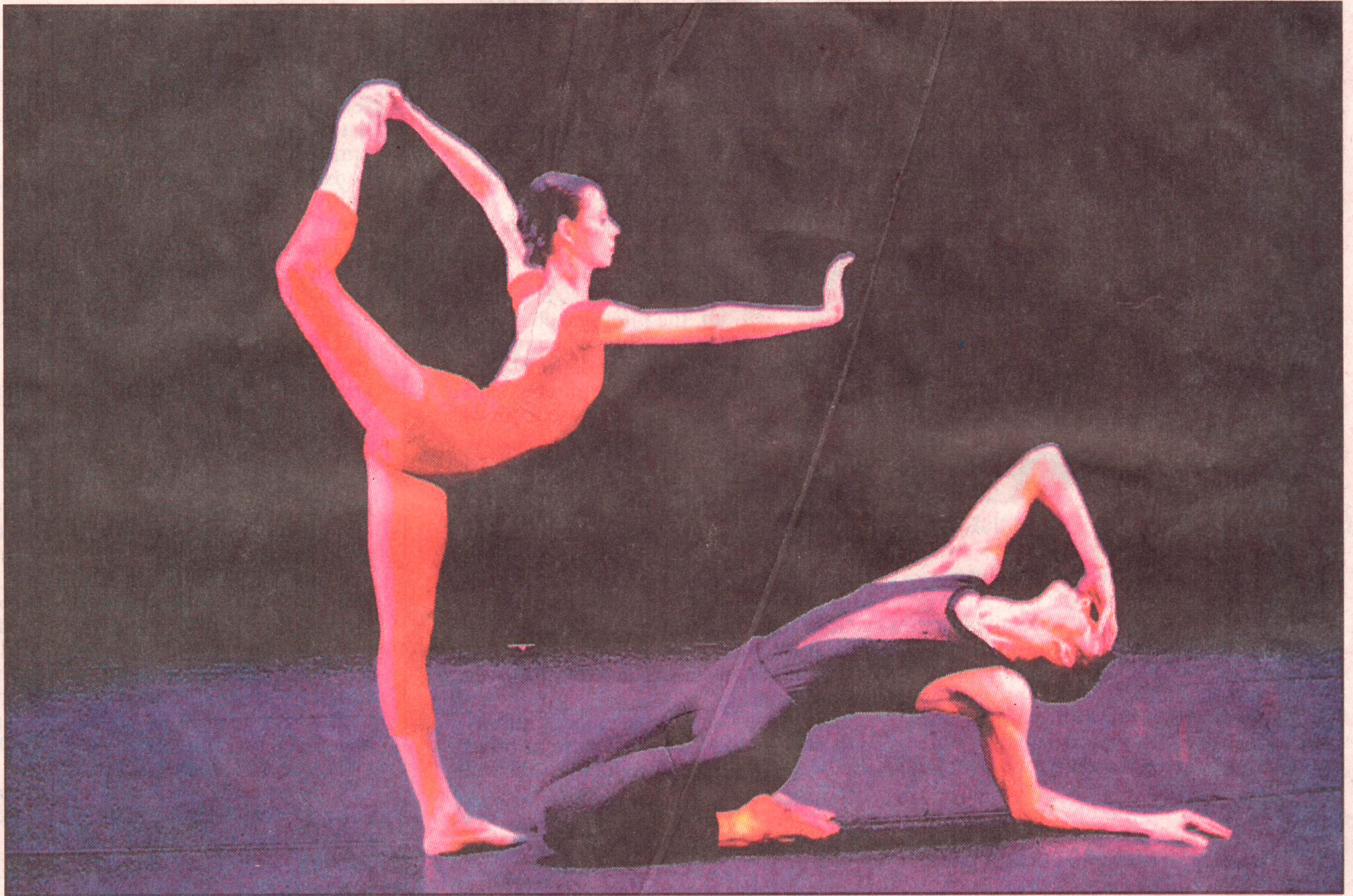


LIFE & STYLE

Features Editor Cheri McSpaden • (616) 546-4266 • cheri.mcspaden@hollandsentinel.com

THE HOLLAND SENTINEL
Thursday, April 6, 2006



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PERFECT MATCH: Marjorie Keymis, left, and Nathaneal Buckley perform in Julio E. Rivera's "Red Butterfly, Black Heart."

Colorful Dreams

Holland choreographer celebrates body, spirit in dance concert

By **PEG McNICHOL**

Staff writer

Most people who recover from serious illness or injury tend to view the days of illness as their darkest. Julio Enrique Rivera, a professional dancer,



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QUARTET: From left, Jessica Noriega, Rodrigo Nunez, Cristobal Ramirez and Cristina Medellin dance in a Grosso Modo performance. Medellin is the company's director.

dad Autonoma de Queretaro, Mexico. Holland and Queretaro are sister cities. Rivera is co-producing this weekend's concerts with Steven Iannacone, director of Aerial Dance Theater, and Cristina Medellin, Grosso Modo's director. Aerial dancers have visited Queretaro three times. It is Grosso Modo's third performance in Holland, its first U.S. show with New York-based Contemporary Motions.

For the first time, each concert will be preceded by live music. The Veracruz trio "Alma

Jarocho," (frequent performers at Margarita's Mexican restaurant in Holland) opens Friday using harp, guitar and mandolin.

Carlos Alberto, el Mariachi, of Puerto Rico, sings at intermission Friday and before Saturday's show.

Rivera admits that some members of the audience may be taken aback by a costume design or two, particularly during his "Mountain of Needles," but points out that his intention is a tasteful celebration of the body as an instrument.

Rivera 25 years ago.

Dancing in a work of his own, Ramos is performing a duet with McGowan intended to serve as a poignant social commentary.

Original company member Ray Tadio, now a member of the Hope dance faculty, will premiere a new work inspired by the world of flowers. Company member Kelly Buwalda has also incorporated flowers in her solo, "Floreciendo," which features the classic Latin song, "Dos Gardenias."

Rivera says he was so impressed with Buwalda's choreography, "I've not touched it."

Buwalda and Jessica Mumford are bringing what Rivera calls a personal favorite of his own repertoire to the stage: "Broken Angels," which incorporates the music of Annie Lennox.

Erik Alberg designed the lighting for the performances, another layer of what Rivera expects to be a colorful, surprising concert.

Please see DANCE, C4

DANCE

Continued from C1

Despite the usual chaos asso-
ciated with the last days of
rehearsal, Rivera revels in
his newfound joy.
"I'm 50 pounds heavier
and a million pounds happi-
er," he says. "I was always an
up-and-happy person. It's
made me feel like God said
to me, 'Yes!'"

Contemporary Motions
Dance Company's concert is
at the Knickerbocker The-
atre, 86 E. Eighth St., Hol-
land. Live music opens both
nights at 7:30 p.m.
Tickets cost \$7 for regular
admission and \$5 for senior
citizens, students. Children
under 12 are admitted free.
Contact Peg McNichol at
(616) 546-4354 or peg.mcnichol@hollandsentinel.com.



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Holland choreographer celebrates body, spirit in dance concert

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Most people who recover from serious illness or injury tend to view the days of illness as their darkest. Julio Enrique Rivera, a professional dancer, refers to being temporarily bedridden and undergoing radiation as scary, but also "a divine vacation."

"It gave me time to reflect and think about many things," he says of a 2004 spinal compression — which occurred while he was touring Europe. It kept him away from teaching at Hope until January of this year. He became more spiritual, he says, and braver.

"In a sense, I became reborn," he says.

The experience influenced the annual concert of Contemporary Motions Dance Company, which he founded in 1986. The upcoming show is its 17th at the Knickerbocker, with a theme, "I Dream in Color," that reflects Rivera's heightened appreciation of life.

Rivera says the shows blend live music with folkloric and modern dances.

The concert is another link in an ongoing cultural exchange started by the Hope College-based Aerial Dance Theater and Grosso Modo from the Universi-



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