

Audience on stage with performers

Trio of performers stage three unique dance show

KATHERINE DOLAN
TOWN CRIER

Peggy Baker realizes very few people know what happens behind the scenes at a show.

So for the second time in four years, she plans to give the audience an intimate look at a dance production.

Peggy Baker Dance Project is presenting *Unfold*, a collaboration of three different dance pieces at the Betty Oliphant Theatre.

Audiences should be prepared to break traditional theatre convention because members will not be shown to a seat in the theatre. Ushers will take them up onto the stage where they will sit and look out at 400 empty audience seats and bear witness to everything that happens behind those pretty red curtains at the side of the

stage.

"I did this staging four years ago and it was seen as very unusual," said Baker.

"Many people came up to me after the performance as some had never been on stage before and explained how they experienced the show in a completely different way. The response was so strong that I decided to do it again."

She said it was easy to come up with a title for the show.

"I decided to call it *Unfold* this time because of the unfolding of the theatre and all the choreography.

"It is an extremely personal and intimate view of performances and this unfolding for the audience creates such an open place of something that is normally closed off for the average viewers," she said.

Three contemporary dance pieces

will be presented by the likes of Kate Alton, Andrea Nann and Peggy Baker, to be accompanied by the pianist Andrew Burashko.

The program consists of the title piece *Unfold* (2000) a rapturous work to Scriabin's Opus 11 Preludes, that will be danced by Baker only one night (May 15). It will then be intentionally passed onto the next generation of dancers Alton and Nann for the remainder of the run.

The second piece, called *Heaven* (2003) is the Toronto premiere of the most recent duet from New York choreographer Doug Varone. This piece has no text, but instead the piano and self (the dancer) engage in a kind of plot with one and other.

And finally, the last piece, *The Disappearance of Right and Left* (2004) is an autobiography and stories from five generations of Baker's family. The entire story ends up revealing a central idea that is a kind of decoding of the title right and left.

Baker remains passionate and thrilled to be bringing these three pieces to the stage.

"I love performing for people in a studio space because you get such an intimate experience of the creative performer. I feel very lucky to never have struggled to find my medium in life and that is big reason why I keep on doing what I do."

As for her expectations for her audience members, she wants to give them something very meaningful.

"I hope that the audience will be moved and that they will have related in a personal way to what they see. My point is not to put on a display of virtuosity, it is to offer the audience a vehicle for their own enrichment through being able to listen and watch things that require their own response to make it complete."

Unfold will open May 11 and run until May 16 at the Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis St. (south of Wellesley). It will be performed one

evening by Baker, May 15 and then Alton will perform May 11, 13, 16 matinees and Nann will perform the May 12, 14 and 16 evening performances.

Show times are Tuesday to Saturday 8:30 p.m., Sunday at 2 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$36 plus service charge. Call the Central Box Office at 416-504-PLAY.