

WINSTON-SALEM

JOURNAL

Tournée in U.S.A.

It's Hard Not to Share in Festivities Of Dynamic Dancers at Arts School

By Jim Shertzer

Journal Arts Reporter

Making its American debut in two performances yesterday at the N.C. School of the Arts, the Italian modern troupe I Danzatori Scalzi (The Barefoot Dancers) often appeared to be dancing for the sheer joy of it.

Accompanied by a double bass player, a percussionist and some taped electronic collages, the company of six women performed a single work — the 70-minute, multi-movement "Concerto" by Patrizia Cerroni, the troupe's founder and one of its dancers.

Miss Cerroni has studied with Merce Cunningham, Pearl Lang and with other American and German choreographers. But her movement vocabulary, which seems drawn from no dance dictionary but her own, looks entirely original.

Much of what the dancers and the accompanying musicians do seems improvised. But this is not the case, said Robert Lindgren, dean of the arts school's School of Dance, who was acting yesterday as the troupe's host.

The style is liberating in its apparent spontaneity and in its use of energy and rhythm. It is also almost completely non-intellectual.

Miss Cerroni tells no stories, and she has no messages. Her dancers rarely throw the audience so much as a communicative look or gesture.

The choreography is mostly a vigorous personal celebration for Miss

Cerroni and her dancers. Understandably, what goes on may appear to be self-indulgent, repetitive and dull to those who choose not to share in the festivities.

What makes the latter choice difficult, however, is the dynamism of the dancers and the unfettered, anything-goes nature of the choreography.

Miss Cerroni and dancers Patrizia Macagno, Rossana Malandrino, Margia Maggipinot, Manuela Memmo and Francesca Patrona are, collectively and individually, an almost irresistibly energetic lot.

Dancing to the music provided by accomplished jazz bass player Giovanni Tommaso and percussionist Luis Agudo, the women buzz across stage like dynamos, their hands and arms snaking through air or whirling about like propellers.

The effects are eerily intriguing, too, when they turn some of that boundless energy inward, which they did in a long sequence to a taped electronic wail later shaped by composer Mauro Bortolotti into sounds of wind and water.

The troupe was at its most appealing, though, in the few sections of "Concerto" that allowed the performers to engage viewers actively.

Especially fun was a section in which Miss Cerroni grabbed a microphone and scat sang a nonsense vocal while her dancers posed in sexy fashion and teasingly peeked at the audience though the chinks between their fingers.

In one of the solos in the second half of "Concerto," there was more game-playing from a dancer whose looks and gestures suggested those of a teasing, streetwise punk about to get into a confrontation with viewers.

I Danzatori Scalzi has headquarters in Rome, where the arts school holds summer dance sessions and where Lindgren saw the troupe.

DANCE
REVIEW