

arts and
entertainment

Director's dream materializes; fortune creates 5 by 2 Plus

By Charlie Krig

Bruce Becker owes his dancing to good doctors, proper healing and luck.

Six years ago he had back problems beginning with a slipped disc that had to be removed and ending with the collapse of the remaining discs in his lower back.

After a lengthy operation, Becker's spine healed correctly and during his year of recuperation he imagined what he wanted to do with the rest of his dance career: form a small repertory dance company free of the limitations of a full-time choreographer. On April 4, 1973, his dream gave its premiere performance.

dance review

That was the start of the 5 by 2 Dance Company. Becker joined Jane Kosminsky, another dancer who was tired of dancing in other persons' shows and companies, to make a dance company with a special theme. The company was made of only two people who performed only five works during each concert. Hence the name 5 by 2.

Now the group has a new name: the 5 by 2 Plus Dance Company. The "Plus" refers to Carol Parker, Kathryn Komatsu and Dan Ezralow, who joined the company two years ago. Becker said adding the extra dancers allows for a greater repertory and that he might add another male "just to even things out."

"I'm very proud of the concept of the company. We're absolutely a modern

dance company. There's not a touch of ballet except for one spoof of ballet we do called *Gallopade*," Becker said.

"We do a spectrum of styles of modern dance from the last 40 years."

Part of Becker's interest in dance came from his aunt, Helen Tamiris, a woman who spread the influence of modern dance with Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey during the early days of the Bennington College dance program. Becker also performs one of Tamiris' works, a piece called *Negro Spirituals* copyrighted by the 5 by 2 Company.

Becker said he studied with his "marvelous" aunt and received much support for his dance career. But his entire family is arts-oriented, Becker said. Everyone is some sort of artist (in dance, painting or sculpture) except for the one "queer duck" of the family who is a metallurgical engineer, he explained.

Becker now is 33 years old which, since he began at age 7, is "a long time to dance." He said he experiences enough pain from his past injuries to "tell me that my performance career is limited," so he is going to do more choreography and less dancing. Also, he said he would like to return to Broadway as a director or choreographer.

"My return to Broadway is imminent. I loved that work (as a dancer) and learned a lot from it. In fact, 5 by 2 wouldn't be here without that experience. The texture and the feel give you a drive for performing," Becker said.

If his work on the stage is a hit, 5 by 2 will benefit, he said, because the company will be subsidized by his earnings and will be able to produce concerts without worrying about money. Becker said his new dream is to get that freedom for the company.



Bruce Becker, 5x2 Plus Dance Company co-founder, performs *Negro Spirituals*, choreographed by Helen Tamiris.

Photo by Zachery Freyman

'Blind Date' captures world's adventurous complexity

By David Wood

Blind Date, by Jerzy Kosinski, Houghton Mifflin, \$8.95

Jerzy Kosinski has arranged another blind date; this one is the blind date between George Levanter and his life and times.

Levanter is a fictional Russian defector, who escapes across the Iron Curtain by contriving international acclaim for his photographic style. Living off these same wits, he makes quite a go of it in the lands of free enterprise.

By chancing and free-lancing, he becomes accomplished in commercial art, investment theory, political and corporate cold-warfare, and in romance.

Levanter is an uncompromising, self-styled man. He has a finely tuned system for playing the jetset game. He can react with spontaneity and authority. And however earnest or urgent, he always keeps a cool head.

While you can sense his honesty, Levanter seems to offer his soul only in superficially unrelated and dryly recounted incidents.

It is appropriate though, just as Kosinski's novelization of it is. Levanter and Kosinski draw out the potential of every moment as they stumble into it. Then Levanter moves on to some half-planned future and packs up a past that is "nothing but an old Polaroid snapshot; no negative; photographer unknown; camera thrown away."

Kosinski's writing style, like Levanter's, is novel by no less than Charles Manson. In *Blind Date*, Kosinski follows "nihilist" any other name. He is just empty it of moral

ing by making it trite or out of place.

In one rare metaphor, when Levanter is fatally stranded on an Alpine slope, Kosinski writes of skiing, "A descent was like life: to love it was to love each moment, to rejoice in the skill and speed of every moment."

Careening the courses of that crystal mountain of the rich, famous, and powerful Levanter has the rare fortune of meeting, or nearly meeting, some historical notables. He was next-door neighbor to Stalin's daughter at Princeton. In his editor friend's office, he chatted with Lindbergh.

Another time, but for a baggage mix-up, he just missed a chance to be slaughtered by no less than Charles Manson, at the home of his friend's friend, Sharon Tate. And, not least, Levanter was among the very last to speak with the Nobel Prize-winning biologist Jacques Monod.

Inviting people like that into a novel, and then making them talk, is poor form. It only makes the fiction that they are a party to just that much more unreal. I would complain that historical orientations should be kept subtler, except I would not like to see Monod bounced out. He is perhaps the most important member of the book.

Monod won the Nobel for his controversial book, *Chance and Necessity*. His theory is a sort of molecular Darwinism. Organisms are the product of what the cells have kept by chance. Kosinski significantly takes *Blind Date's* epigraph from Monod.

"All the traditional systems have placed ethics and values beyond man's reach. Values did not belong to him, he belonged to them. He now knows that they are his and his alone."

By hosting Monod, Kosinski makes some of the novel's otherwise vague thematic and stylistic motivations accessible. Monod is the key for understanding the nature of the blind date with environment.

Kosinski takes the gripes of post-modern

istic morality, which has through billions of years made presidents out of proteins, and fabricates it into the short, haphazard career of one man, who, now dead, once lived in our seamy, space-age world.

The result is more than a "nothing ventured, nothing gained" outlook. Kosinski sees there is so much arbitrary chance in our lives that meeting our present and future is less like a venture, more like a blind date. You get into it, and have to play it as it comes, and get what you can.

Levanter evolves up through the higher classes of society so readily, because he courts chance, is great at improvising, and is as principled and aimless as a cell. He lives in the present, will identify with no certain self, and he likes his involvements ambiguous and open-ended.

After one blind date, Levanter ends up married to maybe the richest, youngest, terminally ill, widow in America. On another blind date, his exciting lover is a transsexual. Levanter always moves on.

Voice instructor to perform

Edward J. Crafts, a voice instructor in the UNL School of Music, will perform a free, public recital at 8 p.m. in Kimball Recital Hall.

Crafts plans a 14-part program including these works: *O Dafni che di quest'anima* (1828) and *Duc canzonette Italiane* (1828) by Mikhail Glinka; *Il giocatore sfortunato* by Giovanni Caroli; *Vo cercando* by Emanuele Barone d'Astorga; *Aus dem spanischen Liederbuch*, *Aus dem italienischen Liederbuch* and *Prometheus* (1889) by Hugo Wolf; *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* by Gustav Mahler; *Le Bestiaire* (1918) by Francis Poulenc; and *Twelve Oxen* (1924) *Corpus Christi* (1927), *The Fox* (1930), *My Own Country* (1927) and *Jillian of Berry* (1926) by Peter Warlock.

Heather Ross will sing with Crafts during five selections and Harold Evans, another School of Music voice instructor, will play the piano.

John S. J. ... Mail ...

Kosinski makes a comment on it all. Levanter is killed by the winds and weather. It is a reminder that this is a morality necessitated by mortality.

However, in *Blind Date*, Levanter is not the main character so much as his date, the world. Kosinski mostly spends his book glimpsing at the texture of our randomly chance-ridden, capitalist, dislocated, technological modern time. It is a small world, where paths can cross in marvelous ways; and big enough that nobody is so different that there is not someone else like him running around.

It is a world where politics, sex, money, or nature can evolve pathologies into graces and graces into pathologies. And it is a world more fraught with blind dates than ever.

Blind-dating is the adventuresome nature of living, to Jerzy Kosinski. Though *Blind Date* blandly defers judgment on it, it does capture the complexity well.

ther recital Tuesday night. The UNL Symphony Orchestra will perform a concert at 8 p.m. in Kimball Hall. Again, the concert is free and open to the public.

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