

Momix dance is not just goofing off; troupe creates art from child-like play

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"We play with the idea — like kids do," Mills said. "The question always is, 'Is it just fun, or is it art?'" Boeding said.

Momix performances are not just play, both men agreed, but something more. The troupe carefully puts together their work, something that requires talent and skill. Because play is so important, it becomes an integral part of the work.

The play element and improvisation keep the performance "fresh," Mills said. A lot of dance companies think about a piece, instead of just creating. Momix is part of a renaissance of naive art — viewing the world with a child's eye — and should not be overanalyzed.

"Take it as it is," Mills said. "You shouldn't feel bad if you don't get 'it.'" Each piece is composed of layers of meaning, he added, and everyone will go away from a performance with something different.

Dance is a "shaking of space, a rhythmic movement" and an ancient form of communication, the performers told the freshmen, before beginning their next demonstration.

"We try and come up with different approaches to the theater of dance," Mills said.

Mills began the next demonstration while Boeding talked. At first, Mills played with a large sheet of plastic. He twisted and turned with it, fluttered it in the breeze, wrapped it around himself, exploring the properties of that sheet. Boeding explained that the prop was still in the experimental stage, and not part of the act yet.

Then, Mills picked up a clear plastic bag that had been tethered by plastic hose around its opening. Running, Mills filled it with air and trapped himself inside the plastic bag.

Besides making every mother's nightmare about dry-cleaning bags come to life, Mills had created a lovely effect. The light played off the plastic film, and Mills manipulated the space and material quite skillfully.

Mills said he could go two ways with the plastic sheet idea: represent a man trapped, or do a piece entitled

"Safe Sex."

The bag swayed and undulated to the air currents in the auditorium, shimmered under the spotlights.

Even the freshmen were silent. Someone said youth is wasted on the young. Why present such a sublime thing as modern dance on someone who might care less?

sculpture. He created the "Circle-walker" in 1979, and started looking for dancers to take part in his kinetic sculpture.

In the meantime, Boeding took choreography and dance classes to be able to delve deeper into the dancers' psyche. But after taking classes, Boeding discovered that teachers

'Take it as it is. You shouldn't feel bad if you don't get 'it.'

— Mills

Voorhees said that Momix is an excellent introduction to modern dance for freshmen. Besides being exciting, the dancers also have something in common with most of the freshmen in the audience.

Both Mills and Boeding come from rural communities in the Midwest, and didn't start dancing until later in life. Boeding was 28, and Mills had reached the age of 20 before exploring dancing.

Mills started out as an artist, but was also active with swimming and gymnastics. When he hurt his shoulder, he had to find new ways to be physical. Dance became an important outlet for his energy.

Boeding graduated in South Dakota with an undergraduate degree in

wanted him to dance. Boeding found himself dancing.

"Dancers can come from an ordinary place like the Midwest," Voorhees said. "That's important for freshmen to know."

"I think we have a great deal of empathy for these people," Mills said of the freshmen. Both performers thought the class was good — especially considering the fact that it was an early Monday morning. Not only did the class have good specific questions, but three students came up after class to find out more.

Finally, Mills demonstrated Boeding's sculpture dance "Circle-walker." The "Circle-walker" is a lot

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