

## Troupe expresses deep meaning in movement

### DANCE Review

It was about life moving from darkness into light.

It was about consciousness and the terrible struggle it involves.

Sankai Juku, the Japanese dance troupe, performed Sunday night for a responsive Lied Center audience.

This was their second appearance in Lincoln. The first time was in Kimball Recital Hall, before the Lied Center was completed.

Their dance, entitled "Shijima: The Darkness Calms Down in Space," formed, of itself, a complete cycle.

In the process it told the story of life — and consciousness.

Life evolved on earth from the elements, from the darkness of the mineral world which is without feeling, without awareness, totally dark.

And yet we owe an allegiance to the darkness that is at the center of

things.

Though that darkness is lost to us, who, except in small and private moments, see only the light of this life, with its distractions — or the darkness that awaits us at the end of the tunnel: death.

This dance, while not entirely accessible to all, nevertheless was a complete and cohesive work. It depicted a world seemingly alien, yet really representing the spiritual dimension of our own placid reality.

It is our world as it really appears in the realm of dream — or to the keen

senses of the gifted artist.

There is always more here than meets the eye.

It takes a special gift to perceive the true state of human beings in this dark and unconscious universe.

It takes great skill to convey the feeling of wonder and terror that perception brings.

It needs a work of art, and no mere craft, to carry the weight of that communication.

Ushio Amagatsu, the choreographer/director of the piece, has created a work of art.

Set against a backdrop of molds taken from the human form, the dance took place in a temple of stone.

Human bodies seemed about to emerge from the rough-hewn rock.

The story of the suffering that is life, and the horror of death — in a way, the inability to truly die the death of plants and animals — is the story of humankind.

"Shijima" is a fundamental story, on par with our "Gilgamesh" myths

See DANCE on 10

## Action and intensity make movie guilty on all counts

### FILM

#### "Judgment Night"



A powerful movie with a powerful soundtrack, "Judgment Night" is a tale of friendship and fear, loyalty and desperation, exemplified by solid performances and unique situations.

The story, however, is not incredibly original. Four friends get lost in the wrong hood of Chicago on the way to a boxing match. They witness a gang execution, and the rest of the movie is about their attempts to escape with their lives.

The acting and intensity are what raise this film above the standard "chase" movies.

The four friends, held together by their individual relationships with Frank Wyatt (Emilio Estevez), find their loyalty to each other strained as they run for their lives. Frank, with a wife and kid, is the mature foundation for the group, but his logical decisions aren't enough to escape the gang.

Cuba Gooding, Jr. is excellent as Mike Peterson, an ultra-confident jock, who almost breaks down after he realizes his own mortality. He is also confused about his best friend Frank's change from the chaotic lifestyle of their youth to that of a responsible husband and father.

Frank's younger brother, John (Stephen Dorff), is very impulsive, and he often gets into situations he isn't prepared to deal with. He and Frank come to terms with each other during the course of the movie, which helps them to survive this judgment night.

Ray Cochran (Jeremy Piven) is the final and weakest link in this chain of friends. Calm and



Courtesy Universal

From left, Emilio Estevez, Cuba Gooding Jr., Jeremy Piven and Stephen Dorff play four friends who make a wrong turn off an expressway and must face a test of friendship, loyalty and courage in "Judgment Night."

confident in the outside world, he is unsure of his abilities on the street and quickly falls apart.

But it is Dennis Leary who gives this movie its street character. Completely believable as a minor ruler in the projects of Chicago, his character Fallon is cruel, cold, sadistic and amusing.

The suspense level of this film peaks early — with an intensity that makes it hard to keep

your pants clean. Excellent acting, combined with alien environments, keeps the audience guessing. No one is ever sure where the next assault will come from.

Another bonus is the movie's completely original and excellent soundtrack. The music adds to the movie in many scenes and even appears in the cast, as House of Pain member Erik Schrody makes his acting debut as Rhodes,

a member of Fallon's gang.

Not the movie of the year, "Judgment Night" is what it set out to be—a terrific thriller that combines humor and intrigue with action and violence. It will appeal to many moviegoers.

—Joel Strauch

## Live Laraaji gives New Age bad name

### Concert review

Maybe I should grow my hair out, grow my beard, get a karate tunic and hit the road. With my wild-man act I'd tour the country charging \$10 a pop to let the rubes watch me mumble and caper about the room.

And I wouldn't feel badly about it, not in the least. I'd still be offering as much value as Laraaji.

Laraaji, who performed Saturday night at the Bemis Art Gallery in Omaha, rides high on the New Age bandwagon. I'm just sorry it's too late for me to jump on.

Once the market supports his kind of nonsense, the show's about to close — you can count on it.

Laraaji played an electric zither, two of them, that he'd made from autoharps.

He also "played" windchimes. Not chimes like you see on Neal Peart's drum set — windchimes, the kind they hang above a storefront door to announce a customer.

He also had a synth and an effects machine that he seemed incapable of programming.

In fact, except for the effects, I could have done pretty much his whole show for him.

I sing at least as well and play drums

better. And how inspired do you have to be to run your fingernails up and down and up and down the strings of an autoharp?

Maybe it's just me. I haven't seen a lot of New Age music performed live. I just didn't know it was so mind-numbingly easy.

And Laraaji seemed to be winging it a lot of the time. Working extemporaneously — off the top of his head.

But if he's going to do that he ought to be better at it. Otherwise, what's wrong with sticking to a prescribed format? He's a performer, he should have more care for the kind of show he puts on.

In fairness I have to say the audience — about 50 people — seemed pretty appreciative.

They listened with attention to Laraaji's incomprehensible and dull philosophy. They laughed at the funny parts and cooperated with the exercises he asked us to do.

Only a few malcontents left before the final "OM" circle. How I envied them their freedom to do so.

But I kept hoping against hope that Laraaji would do something cool, say something worth hearing, actually play his instruments.

It never happened, or not \$10 worth.

What's funny is that I'd already heard Laraaji's latest CD, "Flow Goes the Universe," and found it very nice.

Like most New Age music it was relaxing and made excellent ambient sound. It fit the role of background to conversation admirably. I enjoyed it.

But then I didn't have to watch Laraaji. I didn't have to put up with him fumbling at the controls of his equipment, or stopping in the middle of a song to say something. Laraaji didn't talk on the CD.

In concert Laraaji spewed rambling sermons between songs.

At every juncture I thought he was on the verge of actually saying something that didn't sound like it was cribbed from a parody of some quasi-mystic self help book.

He never did.

But again, the audience didn't groan, or walk out en masse.

I couldn't decide. I thought maybe they were just too far gone into New Age to give a damn about anything being actually wise — maybe they were so hungry for meaning that they'd swallow anything, no matter how incoherent or banal.

Maybe it was just the opposite. Maybe they'd never thought of this stuff, or heard it anywhere, even in parody.

Maybe it was all new to them.

Or maybe it was me.

Maybe I'm a jaded critic who can't see the sincerity in the simple, very simple, child-like, or childish, stylings of a performer who, at every opportunity, made a little advertisement for his own enlightenment.

Maybe so.

All I know for certain is that Laraaji in performance is something that should not be forced on anyone.

—Mark Baldrige

## 'Jim Rose' video captures nausea of the real thing

It's bizarre ... it's outlandish ... it's nauseating ... it's The Jim Rose Circus Sideshow, last year's Lollapalooza surprise hit unleashed on home video.

Filmed at Seattle's Moore Theatre in February, Rose and his five sick buddies secure the rank of Champions of Disgust.

As an appetizer, Rose started the show himself by, among other things, driving a nail into his face.

The main course offered The Amazing Mr. Lifo, who lifted irons and cinder blocks with sensitive body parts, like his nipples and earlobes. He used other more-sensitive organs, but this is a family newspaper.

The delicacies abounded, with Rose cheering on his partners and the audience Sam Kinison-style. "Beautiful ... everybody say 'beautiful,'" he howled.

A charming fellow named The Torture King demonstrated fun things to do with meat skewers and your face, as well as munching on fire.

Tattooed head to toe as one big jigsaw puzzle, the mysterious Enigma swallowed assorted insects, including maggots. Rose pointed out the little critters could eat their way out of his stomach if not properly chewed. Enigma followed the bug supper with a sword chaser.

For dessert, Matt "The Tube" Crowley pumped a concoction of beer, chocolate syrup,

See ROSE on 10