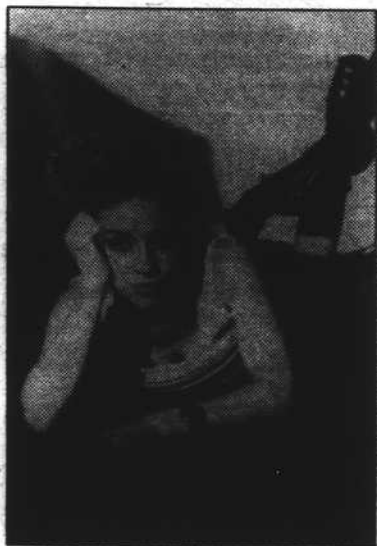


New Releases



COURTESY PHOTO
ANI DIFRANCO's new album, "Little Plastic Castle" will hit store shelves nationwide today. The album, which is being released on DiFranco's own Righteous Babe Records label, is her 12th album.

DiFranco's
'Castle' leads
new releases

BY JIM ZAVODNY
Staff Reporter

Folk singer/songwriter and righteous babe Ani DiFranco releases her 12th album today on her own record label. The new album, titled "Little Plastic Castle," is the follow-up to 1997's "Living In Clip," DiFranco's most successful record to date.

Columbia Records debuts two of its new rhythm and blues/soul singers this week with albums from the En Vogue-like group Destiny's Child and solo youngster Kimberly Scott.

Rap artists dominate the two new movie soundtracks coming out today. The latest Wayans Brothers film, "Senseless," includes previously released tracks from the Gravediggaz, Roni Size and Moby, among others. The Wu-Tang Clan, ONYX and Nas grace the soundtrack of the new movie "Ride," which was formerly titled "I-95."

Electronica, the music industry's most recent fad, represents itself on a new compilation titled "Digital Empire: Electronica's Best." Appearing on the album are two of techno's English champions, Prodigy and The Chemical Brothers, along with America's The Crystal Method and a host of other block rockin' samplers.

New Releases: February 17, 1998

- B-Tribe: "Sensual Sensual" (Mesa/Atlantic)
- Michael Crawford: "On Eagle's Wings" (Atlantic)
- Deep Forest: "Comparsa" (550 Music)
- Destiny's Child: "Destiny's Child" (Columbia)
- Ani DiFranco: "Little Plastic Castle" (Righteous Babe)
- Various Artists: "Digital Empire: Electronica's Best" (K-tel)
- Jagged Edge: "A Jagged Era" (So So Def/Columbia)
- Original Movie Soundtrack: "Ride" (Tommy Boy)
- Kimberly Scott: "Kimberly Scott" (Columbia)
- Original Movie Soundtrack: "Senseless" (Gee Street/V2)

Lied Center

dancing *in the* street

Chicago-based company comes back to Lied

BY LIZA HOLTMEIER
Staff Reporter

In the beginning, it consisted of four dancers and a choreographer performing at senior centers.

Twenty years later, it is a 22-person ensemble, performing across the nation at places like Jacob's Pillow, the American Dance Festival and Kennedy Center.

Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, which performs at the Lied Center for Performing Arts this Friday, has become one of the premiere dance companies in the United States. Its repertoire, which is described as contemporary modern and ballet, includes such well-known choreographers as Twyla Tharp and Bob Fosse.

Lou Conte, a former Broadway dancer and Joffrey scholarship winner, founded the company in 1977. At the time, the company's four dancers had limited performances, and their repertoire consisted entirely of pieces by Conte.

Conte realized early on that he wanted to bring in other choreographers, said Carrie Ranck, communications manager for Hubbard Street. She said Conte didn't want to be like Paul Taylor or Martha Graham, choreographers whose companies exclusively showcase their own works.

Shortly after its inception, Hubbard Street began commissioning works by other choreographers.

Margo Sappington is one choreographer who has played a marked role in the Hubbard Street repertoire.

"She has very different ways of moving," said Josef Patrick, who has danced with Hubbard Street for 12 years. "The company has five pieces by her, and you wouldn't know they were by the same person."

Friday's program includes one of Sappington's pieces.

The company formed one of its most important artistic relationships in 1990 with choreographer Twyla Tharp. In the past eight years, Hubbard Street has become a showcase for Tharp's classics as well as her new works.

"I love the quirkiness of Tharp's choreography," Patrick said. "It looks like it's not choreography. It looks like something everybody can do, but yet it's very intricate."

Patrick said working with Tharp had been a treasured experience.

"She's kind of like an Italian mother," Patrick said. "She's very strong and demanding, but it's only because she cares and wants you to look good."

Tharp's additions to Hubbard Street's numbers include the ballroom-like "Nine Sinatra Songs" and the apocalyptic "Fait Accompli."

Kevin O'Day, a former member of Tharp's company, also has forged a strong relationship with Hubbard Street.

"You can definitely see the influence Tharp has had on him," Patrick said. "The way he approaches things is similar."

However, Patrick added that O'Day's choreography tended to take more from classical ballet technique.

Because the style of choreography Hubbard Street performs varies, dancers must be versatile in a variety of movements.

"When I first joined the company, the choreography was jazzier and more in the musical theater style," Patrick said. "Since then, we've become a company for major contemporary modern and jazz."

Despite these changes, the dancers' training while at Hubbard Street is still rooted in the traditions of ballet.

Ranck said it was no surprise that the majority of Hubbard Street's dancers have previous experience with other city ballet companies or conservatories.

"That ballet base is important for strength and technique," Ranck said.

Like most dance companies, Hubbard Street has a strong outreach program in addition to its repertoire building.

Two years ago, the company established a minicompany for young, preprofessional dancers. This group of five dancers learns pieces from the Hubbard Street repertoire and then performs in Chicago schools. In the spring, the same schools are invited to performances by the main company.

While on tour, the company maintains its educational goals through master classes with area dancers.

While in Nebraska, Hubbard Street will teach a master class in Omaha co-sponsored by the Omaha Modern Dance Collective and the Moving Co. It will be held at the University of Nebraska at Omaha Dance Lab on Thursday from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

To register, call (402) 554-

2670.

The company's Friday night performance will begin with "Lady Lost Found." Daniel Ezralow, a former Pilobolus dancer, choreographed this piece to English folk songs by Percy Granger.

Following Ezralow's piece will be "Mirage" by Margo Sappington, with music by Vaughn Williams. This piece is a modern balletic duet based on the legend of Narcissus and Echo.

The third piece of the evening will be "Sechs Tänze," choreographed by Jiri Kylian to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Six German Dances."

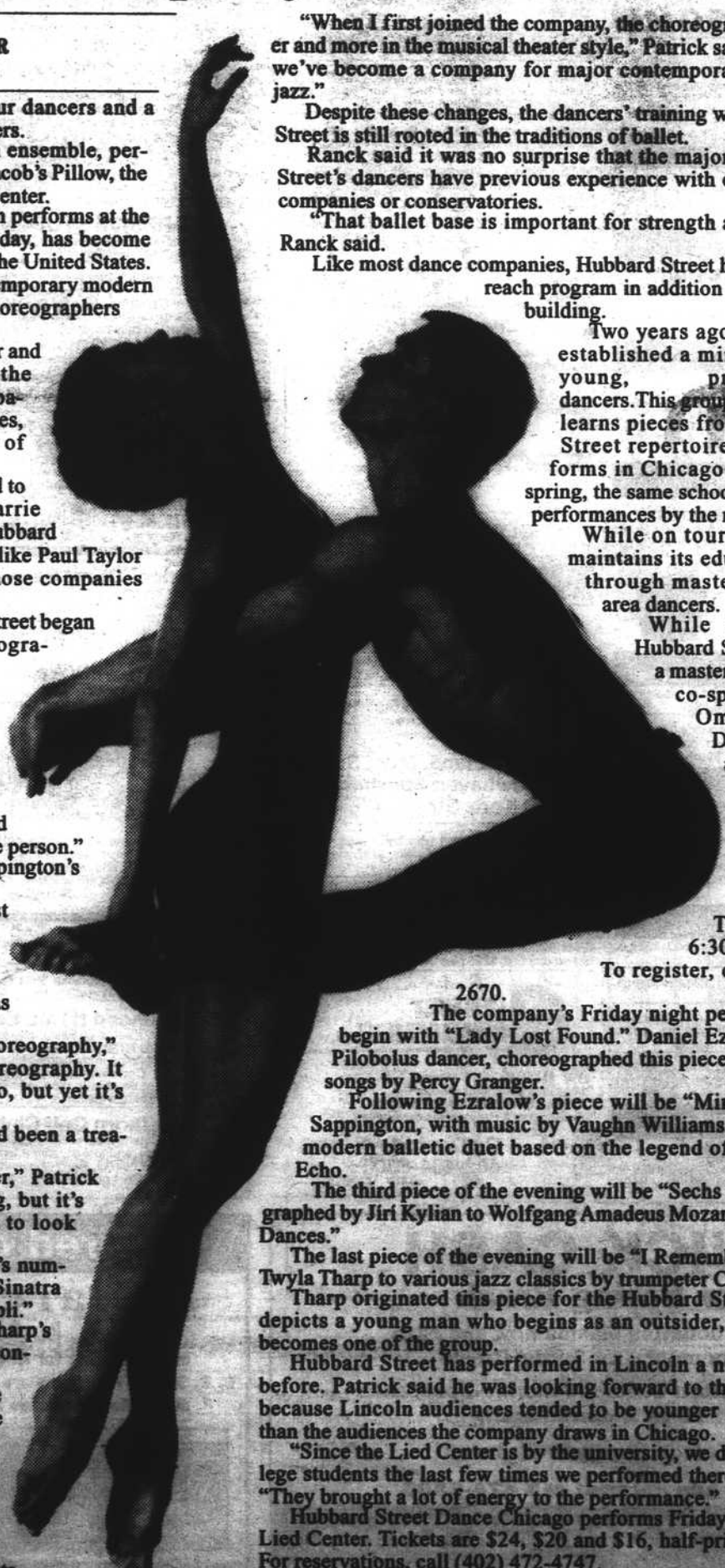
The last piece of the evening will be "I Remember Clifford" by Twyla Tharp to various jazz classics by trumpeter Clifford Brown.

Tharp originated this piece for the Hubbard Street dancers. It depicts a young man who begins as an outsider, but eventually becomes one of the group.

Hubbard Street has performed in Lincoln a number of times before. Patrick said he was looking forward to this performance because Lincoln audiences tended to be younger and more vocal than the audiences the company draws in Chicago.

"Since the Lied Center is by the university, we drew a lot of college students the last few times we performed there," Patrick said. "They brought a lot of energy to the performance."

Hubbard Street Dance Chicago performs Friday at 8 p.m. at the Lied Center. Tickets are \$24, \$20 and \$16, half-price for students. For reservations, call (402) 472-4747.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HUBBARD STREET DANCE CHICAGO
HUBBARD STREET DANCE CHICAGO will perform at the Lied Center for Performing Arts Friday night at 8. The company includes dancers Cheryl Mann and Patrick Mullaney.