

'Breathing Show' comes to Lied

■ One of the world's foremost choreographers performs in town for one night only.

By Shelley Mika

Staff writer

The Lied Center for Performing Arts has a reputation for bringing in some of the best performers in the country.

Tonight is no exception.

Bill T. Jones, one of the world's foremost modern dance choreographers, will perform his solo piece, "The Breathing Show," for one night only.

Jones, in an interview from his home outside of New York, said this show brings him back to the stage and away from a demanding choreography schedule.

"I wanted to take a break from business as usual and get in touch with my performing," Jones said. "I want to feel what it is like again to craft an evening of my own tastes and styles."

His style have been a long time in the making.

Jones, now 47, began his formal dance training at the State University of New York where he studied modern dance and classical ballet.

In 1982, Jones formed his own company, the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company. Joined with his late partner Zane, Jones created more than 50 works for his dancers.

Jones' success has advanced beyond his self-established circle.

Jones has been commissioned to create dances for both modern and ballet dance companies including the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Boston Ballet and the Berlin Opera Ballet.

"He is widely recognized in the dance world," said Lisa Fusillo, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln dance professor. "He's a creative, innovative, intellectual and artistic person."

"The Breathing Show" does more than display Jones' dancing talent - it explores Jones' artistic influences, which stem from filmmakers, musicians and authors. The result is a multimedia presentation.

"Life is an ongoing commentary on

life, thought, change and time," Jones said. "I'd like to share that through a form that can suggest all of those categories without actually underlining them."

"The Breathing Show" introduces a central metaphor of gardening through a folk song written and performed by Jones. Jones said he feels this metaphor reflects his personal views about his profession.

"The body is like a piece of land that is planted and cultivated, which is my philosophy of dancing," Jones said.

The first piece in the performance encompasses four pieces of music by Franz Schubert, during which Jones said he will explore different moods while improvising.

"It will probably be very contemporary," Fusillo said.

"By that I mean it could be anything and everything."

With the help of Shelley Eshkar and Paul Kaiser, Jones created "Ghostcatching," a film which uses the latest motion capture technology.

To create the film, Jones fixed sensors to the joints of his body. As he moved, infrared sensors picked up the motions and were displayed as a series of dots on a screen. These dots were then reconstituted as line drawings. The final result is an animated film that is based on Jones' movements.

"Ghostcatching" divides the main dance pieces as well as a break from tradition.

"It's very evocative," Jones said. "It's what happens to the dancer when the body and the personality are removed - it's what's left."

"Ghostcatching" isn't the only innovative element in the program. One section finds Jones thinking of himself as a cubist man dancing to the music of jazz musician Thelonious Monk.

In another piece, Jones relies heavily on his improvisational skills in a section he calls "Ghost in a Machine." The audience is encouraged to participate in this segment,

PREVIEW The Breathing Show

WHERE: Lied Center for Performing Arts, 301 N. 12th St.

WHEN: Tonight at 8 p.m.

COST: \$36, \$32 and \$28, half-price for students

THE SKINNY: Modern dance choreographer brings uncommon work to Lincoln.

which breaks the standard boundaries between dancer and viewer.

"He challenges his audience to think and react, not just to sit back and absorb," Fusillo said.

The audience is asked to give a number between one and 10. Each number is matched with a song inside of Jones' "machine." The song that correlates with the number the audience picks then plays and others follow in a random order. Jones said he has no knowledge of what song will play and must improvise at a moment's notice.

Jones cites influences from a number of artists. But perhaps most suited to this performance are the independent filmmakers of the '60s and '70s.

"They tried to redefine what a narrative was," Jones said. "They were all non-linear thinkers. I'm constantly looking for different ways to define perception."

But, from time to time, Jones' untraditional work spawns controversy.

In 1995, members of the Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan., protested Jones' performance because his material explored issues dealing with homosexuality and AIDS.

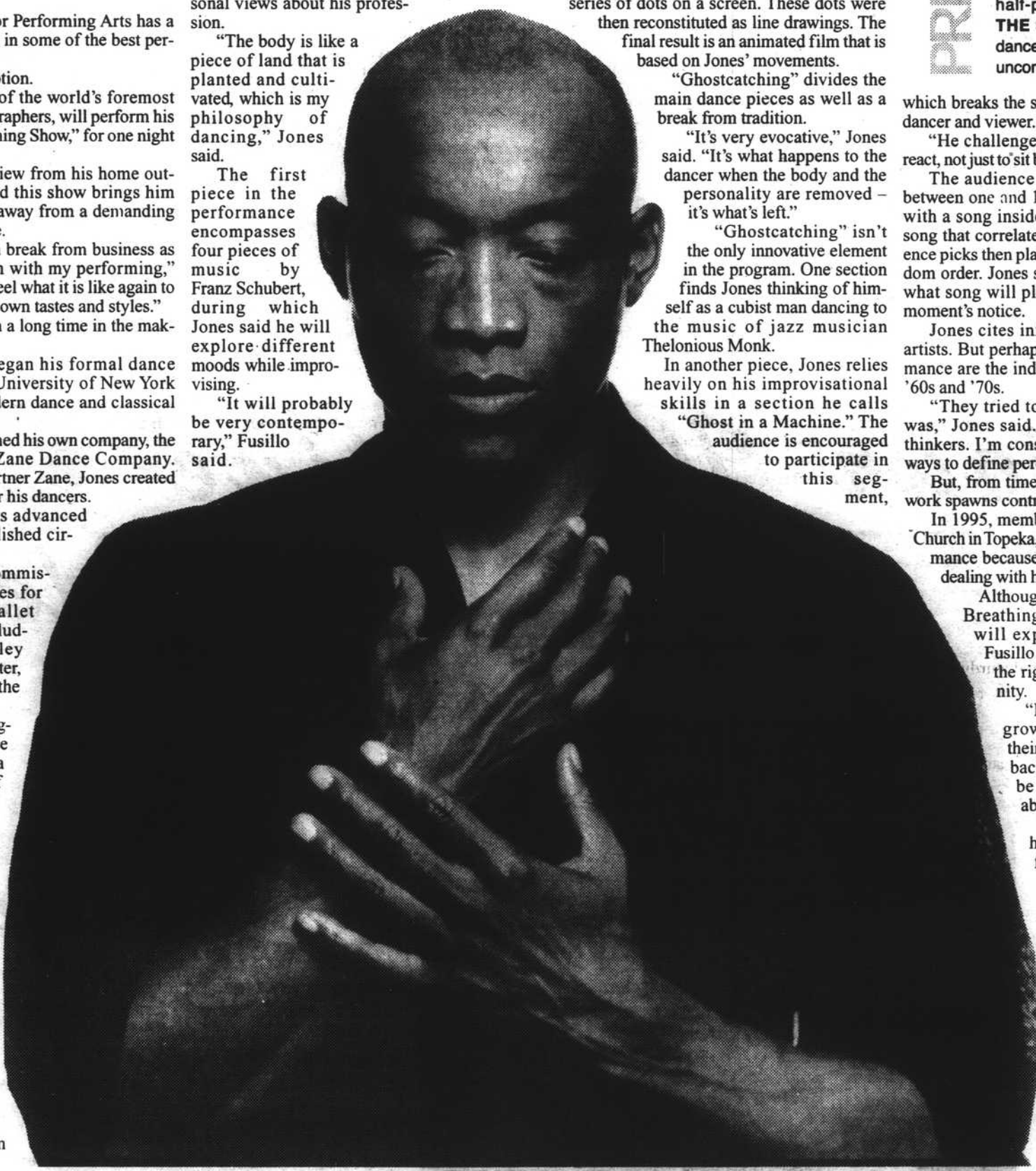
Although Jones' description of "The Breathing Show" suggests the show will explore other facets of life, Fusillo said. Jones' return is a step in the right direction for the community.

"I think it's a reflection of the growth of Lincolinites opening their minds that he's been invited back," Fusillo said. "We should be proud of our own receptive abilities."

As for Jones, the past won't hinder his desire to express his feelings through dance.

"I look forward to coming back to Lincoln to share this performance," Jones said. "I'd like to share my love for this art form with people while growing deeper as a man and an artist."

Courtesy Photo
Dancer Bill T. Jones brings his original style of dance to the Lied Center tonight.



Chihuly's glass art displayed throughout Joslyn

By Jason Hardy

Staff writer

The medium of glass blowing has always brought with it some form of controversy.

Certain circles argue that it is more craft than actual art. Others argue the opposite.

Starting Feb. 12, the Joslyn Art Museum will make a strong contention that glass blowing is not just art - it's amazing.

"Dale Chihuly: Inside & Out," a solo exhibit by the world-renowned glass blower, will be featured at the Joslyn Art Museum, 2200 Dodge St. in Omaha, starting this weekend and running through June 4. It is an exhibit like no other and one that has literally taken over the Joslyn.

The extensive collection includes pieces in a variety of mediums including ice and plastic and paint and glass with sizes ranging from mere inches to 35 feet.

Because of the illuminating quality of Chihuly's bright, colorful work, the Joslyn has

placed his pieces on floors, walls and windows throughout the entire museum, both inside and out of the usual gallery setting.

"We made quite a number of substantial modifications to both gallery and public locations," said Janet Farber, associate curator for 20th century art at the Joslyn and the curator in charge of the Chihuly exhibition: "This has involved the work of structural engineers, a wonderful construction team and a lot of electricians as well."

"His work really thrives on the perfect lighting conditions, and we went to great extremes to provide those conditions," she said.

Chihuly often works in series, so the exhibition encompasses a wide variety of his creations. Pieces as diverse as those from his "Chandelier" series of hanging glass structures mounted on steel frames, and his "Persian" series, which hint at the antique styles of Near Eastern and Venetian glass, will be exhibited.

They're arranged as wall-mounted sprays of flared colored glass to create an enchanting

PREVIEW Inside and Out

WHERE: Joslyn Art Museum, 2200 Dodge St., Omaha, Nebraska

WHEN: Feb. 12 - June 4

COST: \$6 for adults, \$4 for students

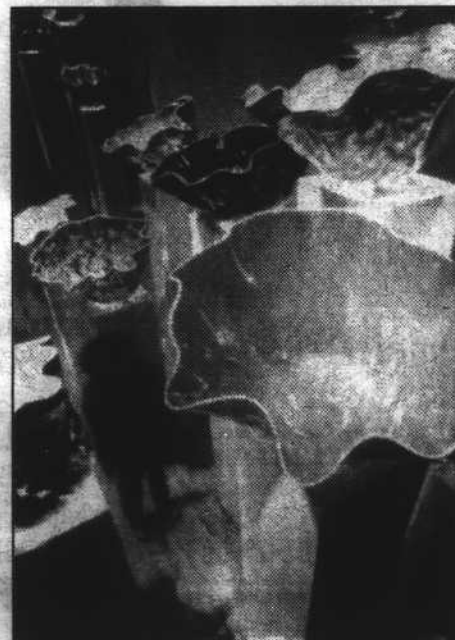
THE SKINNY: Chihuly work transforms glass into art.

walkway.

With the exhibition also comes the permanent installment of a piece Chihuly specifically designed for the Joslyn's atrium. The work is a 35-foot high, 24-foot wide structure composed of hundreds of blown glass shapes attached to a steel frame shaped like an inverted sail.

Farber said it was exciting to present an

Please see GLASS on 11



Courtesy Photo