



King County Arts Commission

# PERFORMA87

A FESTIVAL OF NEW WORKS

- ...to celebrate new work and living creative artists...
- ...to encourage government support for new works...
- ...to foster the collaboration between Northwest and national/international artists and...
- ...to acknowledge the overall cultural ecology and vitality of the region...

# PERFORMA 87

A FESTIVAL OF NEW WORKS

## A DOCUMENTARY

Produced by the King County Arts Commission

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## PREFACE

This publication has been commissioned by the King County Arts Commission to document and commemorate PERFORMA'87, a festival of 21 new works in theater, dance, music and performance art. In the fall of 1987, more than 500 regional, national and international artists assembled in King County, Washington to create and produce these original works in such diverse locations as a floating barge, a Metro bus, an airport, the meadow of a County park, concert halls, theaters and community centers. The Festival included numerous educational activities, public access events and two creativity conferences. More than 60,000 spectators participated in the historic presentation of these events in a grand celebration of the King County Arts Commission's twentieth anniversary.

The Festival was conceived in 1982 by the Commission as a means for providing direct support to individual creative artists, to focus attention on the creative process in the performing arts, to encourage our regional artists to dare to do what they dream they can do, and enable them to do it.

The guiding idea of this publication is not simply to document the events themselves, but to give a visual sense of the process and path to realization, the historic fits and starts which accompany the birth and development of any new idea. It was after all the unique purpose of this festival to support not only the production of the events, but the conception of them as well. This required a grand leap of faith on the part of many individuals along the way and the sustained dedication of the Commission and the King County government.

In spite of its numerous configurations, the uncertainties, and the tumultuous years of planning and development, the idea of the Festival survived with resounding success. PERFORMA'87 signaled a bold new initiative on the part of government toward the support of creative artistic endeavor, the health and future of our regional artists, and the quality and vitality of our Northwest cultural community.

Charles Rathbun, Editor  
Assistant Festival Coordinator



# WHISTLESTOP DANCE CO./TICKLE TUNE TYPHOON/ DANNY DEARDORFF— 3 WAYS

Interview by Roger Downey

## TO FAMILY FUN

WHISTLESTOP DANCE COMPANY  
TICKLE TUNE TYPHOON  
DANNY DEARDORFF  
"THE EARTH IS OUR HOME"

*"We don't have just one family that we live with in this one house and city but our home is a whole planet and we're related to all the people in it."*

Lorraine Bayes

**D**EBBIE GILBERT, WHISTLESTOP DANCE COMPANY: This was a collaboration that was almost inevitable sooner or later. Joanne and I have been working together for more than 10 years, and a large part of what we do is teach kids the pleasure of getting up and moving to music. And in recent years, we found ourselves using more and more music by this new group Tickle Tune Typhoon. Then we saw them work, and realized that for young children, they have the kind of appeal that rock stars do for older kids. So when the PERFORMA grant came through we called them and said, "How would you guys like to do some shows with us?"

**LORRAINE BAYES, TICKLE TUNE TYPHOON:** Ever since Tickle Tune started out back in 1980, we have put on a multi-disciplinary kind of show: not just somebody with a guitar singing folk songs, but costumes, movement, a live band, full musical arrangements. We've always been developing the dance aspect of our show, making it more professional. Even if you're doing "the Vegeboogie" in giant broccoli costumes there can be more to it than just jumping around. So when Debbie and Joanne called it really fit with what we wanted.

Whistlestop has a strong back-ground in education and an orientation to working with children, and that is a crucial factor, because if you don't know kids it doesn't matter how beautiful your movement is, you're liable to find yourself up there with no one paying attention to you while the audience makes up its own show in the aisles.

**JOANNE PETROFF, WHISTLESTOP:** Also, both our groups work in a similar way in that they encourage participation from the audience. Debbie and I have almost always worked with live musicians, and it was intriguing to think this time about working with musicians that sing, because that opens up the dramatic aspect through the words of the song. But probably the most important thing is not that we work the same way but that we share a lot of the same overall goals, and that we're committed to education as a way of achieving them.

So there's a good rapport not only in our overall goals but in being committed to quality entertainment as a way of achieving them.

**DENNIS WESTPHALL, TICKLE TUNE:** We don't think of ourselves primarily as educators; there has to be a balance between education and entertainment. But the entertainment is

*"What's great is that you can put across really serious kinds of messages by being playful, by playing with ideas."*

Dennis Westphal

Welcome to the part of the Earth Is Our Home. Let us all take an imaginary journey out into space. Let's imagine we are all a part of the universe - a part of the great mystery of life. Imagine the warmth giving sun, all the stars and all the galaxies are living, breathing, growing + changing together. Imagine that each person is an interwoven piece of life, each of our soul an ancient shining star. Now let your eyes gaze upon the moon and wonder about its power. Feel the moon's tremendous pull on ocean tides and remember the moon's connection to human life through the cycles of our bodies as it moves through its phase of fullness, waning, darkness and waxing into the light again.

Let's imagine seeing our planet from the earth, from above, looking down from the sky - the garden planet of green, blue clouds and mountains, of jungles and deserts. A planet of color and abundant life. Reflect on how rare this place is in the universe.

The beautiful earth is a living being within itself and when we share the earth, we are the earth's of this life giving planet. and the earth is our HOME.

opening dialogue of show



Whistlestop's Joanne Petroll and Debbie Gilbert

Rex Afsaroff Photos



Tickle Time Typhoon

not just sugar-coating. What's great is that you can put across really serious kinds of messages by being playful, by playing with the ideas. The PERFORMA show gathers together a lot of the themes we've touched on in our songs in the past under the one idea covered in the title, The Earth is Our Home: how we have a responsibility for taking care of the planet the way we do our home, from human relations to the environment to the sense of appreciation of what nature gives us.

LORRAINE BAYES: "We've got the whole world in OUR hands." This vision of community, where each of us has a role in keeping the world a good place to survive in. We don't have just one family that we live with in this one house and city but our home is a whole planet and we're related to all the people in it. One of the really important songs in the show is called "Everyone is Differently Abled". It's about recognizing and acknowledging that we're all different, specifically people with disabilities and handicaps, but taking the negativity out of that, emphasizing that we all find different ways to make our

lives work. We're using some very big works here, like inter-dependency, and "the best ability is response-ability." But it's all couched in a jazzy, up-tempo number, and it's particularly important that one of our musicians, Danny Deardorff, who uses a wheelchair for mobility, just happens to be a terrific musician, so the children have the experience of seeing somebody dealing with life in a wheelchair, not just hearing a song about it.

DENNIS WESTPHAL: Another example is "The Garbage Blues," which is a song about being aware of recycling, but it's in the form of a rap, "Talkin' Trash" kind of thing, with accompaniment of trash played like percussion instruments. One advantage of the multimedia kind of show is there's something for everyone, something to do, something to look at, something to listen to. We aim at the whole family, because let's face it, it's the parents who bring the children and if they go home saying, "Boy, that was really terrible," they won't be back whatever the kids thought. So we try to have something that appeals on every



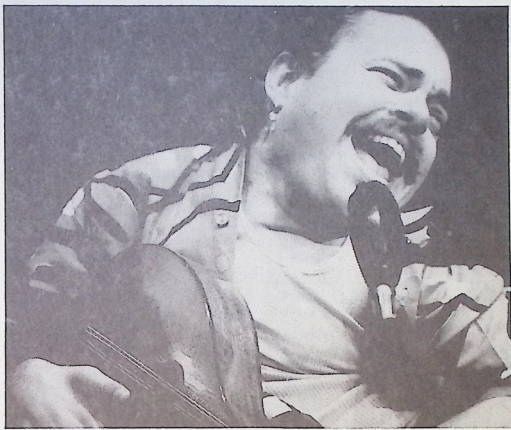
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**LORRAINE BAYES:** We started Tickle Tune because we felt the need for this kind of entertainment for families, and nobody was doing anything like it. We found a hall, the Seattle Concert Theater, and sent out flyers and press releases and got a pretty good turnout—mostly people from the preschool I taught at. The manager of the hall thought it was so wonderful that she invited us to keep on doing it every week. We made our first record in 1983 and from then on we started getting more widely known. Our second album has received coverage nationwide.

**DENNIS WESTPHALL:** We put a tremendous amount of effort into the records. They cost anywhere from \$25,000 to \$30,000 each to produce. We could do them more cheaply, but again we don't think "Oh, it's for kids, we can get away with less." What you put in if you get out. We can live in a big house or we can make great records. We live very modestly. We also have great costumes, and we can afford to have them because I make them myself.

**LORRAINE BAYES:** This show is going to be a real departure for both groups because tighter structure and more thematic continuity means that it'll be harder to play each performance by ear the way we're used to. I mean, we've always been able to say, "oh, oh, that looks like an awfully young audience out there today" and revise the program accordingly, or just throw in a "bear hunt" when we feel that the three-year-olds are getting restless. We'll just have to build the show so that we know where the activities have to happen.

**DENNIS WESTPHALL:** I think that 80 percent or more of the material in the PERFORMA show will be brand new, but I don't know how totally original we can be. We've never done a concert with doing the "Hug-Bug" number. Parents call us up and ask us if they



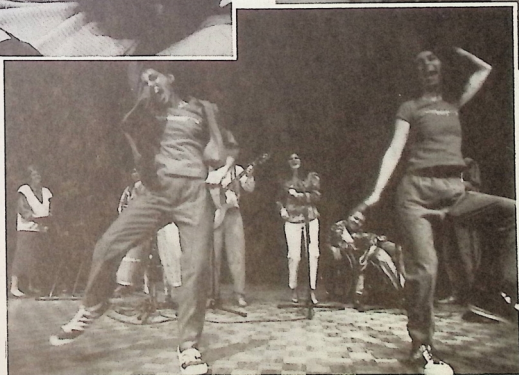
Danny Deardorff

come early can their children be hug-bugs? What we can't afford to lose is the sense of participation that people feel at our shows. Our music has a very wide range, from blues to folk to Latin to rock, but there have to be some very simple tunes for everybody to join in with like "Clap Your Hands." The way people live today in the United States, the decline of the extended family, the worship of individualism, people have lost the sense of tradition and community that some other societies still preserve, where songs and stories and dances get passed on between the generations. They have a need to come together.

**LORRAINE BAYES:** We are artists, but we want to bridge the gap between performer and audience. Sure, sometimes you want everybody to sit still and concentrate on what you're doing, but other times you want to come down off your pedestal and say, "Come on, everybody, join in!"

*"Tickle Tune Typhoon will blow you away. Their sound is round, full, a variety of styles from pop-rock to Latin bop."*

Washington Times



Whistlestop & Tickletoon Typhoon - Rex Rystedt Photos

*"The show encourages ecology and conservation of the earth's resources and building awareness and respect for multi-cultural and racial diversity."*

Dennis Westphall, Tickle Tune Typhoon