

## Dancers from page 1C

Suite, Alley's account of a group of troubled adults in rural, Depression-era Texas, based on what the choreographer referred to as his "blood memories," said Rushing, leaning, too, said Rushing.

Rooted in human emotion and spiritual life, Alley's works speak to all audiences regardless of race and gender, said Rushing. "Even though we're seeing from an African American man's eyes, we're still talking about spirit, Mr. Alley's view of spirit, and spirit reaches all, touches all, has no barriers," Rushing said.

Both *Phases* and *Blues Suite* appear on the company's Detroit program. Other featured works reflect the company's tradition of exploring spirituality, but do so from a contemporary point of view. "The Alley company has the old and the new. We have ballets that remind you where you have come from and where we are now," said Rushing.

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*Exposure*, dancers hold wireless video cameras during the performance. The images projected on 20-foot screens allow the audience to see two sides of the same person and invoke a sense of inner conflict.

The sexy, well-received *Chocolate Seasons*, choreographed by dancer Alley dancer Dwight Rhoden, is a tale of contemporary love, but again, revolves around love as an emotion, said Rushing.

"It's about the tender side of love and the tense side of love. If you are searching for a spiritual experience, you will find it coming to an Alley performance."

## Expressions from page 1C

really impossible to play the piece and of course you're going to fail. Then he has to speak off the cuff and you never know what's going to happen."

Washburn may not know how Anderson's performance of *Falling: A Difficult Piece for Solo String Bass* will turn out or how the audience will accept it, but she's sure the rest of the program will prove enjoyable. In fact, she's presenting the same chamber concert twice because a similar program last season

filled the venue to capacity.

On Jan. 27 the orchestra will play Claude Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*, Johannes Brahms' *Serenade No. 1 in D Major*, and Bohuslav Martinu's *Netet* in addition to *Falling: A Difficult Piece for Solo String Bass* at First United Methodist Church in Plymouth. On Feb. 3, they repeat the program at the Kervin Concert House in Ann Arbor. From the opening sensuous flute solo of Debussy's *Prelude*, which was

written for Stephane Mallarme's poem about the erotic day-dreams of the satyr-like mythological creature, to Martinu's *Netet* which incorporates the composer's love of his native Czech folk music, the concert is sure to be a crowd pleaser.

"I'm always fascinated by composers who've written different versions for different size groups," said Washburn. "Although there were many pieces written for big, lush orchestras in the 19th century,

lots of composers wrote smaller things.

"It's exciting to do newer things and to do them with 10 players. Because these are smaller pieces, it's more intimate. The music is more transparent and crystal clear, and it's exciting to hear all those textures."

Have an interesting idea for a story? Call arts reporter Linda Ann Chomin at (734) 953-2146 or send e-mail to lchomin@oe.homedom.net

## Storytelling from page 1C

yourself in the story," said King. "We're a generation of people who grew up on TV. This engages your imagination in another way."

"We live in a multicultural society and stories help us understand our differences. Stories have the power to teach us understanding and tolerance."

The *Storytelling Festival* is only one of the events presented by Canton Project Arts. The Peter Sparling Dance Company will give a performance 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 9 at Summit on the

Park, 46000 Summit Parkway, Canton. A verbal presentation on dance will be given at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$5 and available by calling (734) 394-5183.

## 'Vagina Monologues' goes beyond mere drama

By ALICE REIN  
STAFF WRITER  
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The sweet Southern lilt quickly turns brittle when Sherri

Parker Lee talks about some newspaper and television reports that attempt to promote the national tour of the *Vagina Monologues* while trying not to

use the word.

"I think it's ridiculous, it's a clinical word for a part of the body," said Lee, who, along with Stella Benford, will be performing in the award-winning play from Jan. 23 to Feb. 11 at Detroit's Second City Theatre. "By their reaction it says to me that a woman's sexual center is something to be ashamed of."

And don't even get Benford going down that road. "I sit onstage each night and read about how, every minute, a woman is abused. In that one

What: *The Vagina Monologues* When: Jan. 23-Feb. 11 Where: The Second City Theatre on Woodward next to the Fox Theatre, Detroit Tickets: \$45 with \$15 tickets available for the first 25 students with ID in line one hour prior to each performance. \$85 for the opening night charity gala on Tuesday, Jan. 23 Information: (313) 983-6811.

movement.

Four years ago, Enslar initiated V-Day, a global movement to stop violence against women. And last year, hundreds of college campuses, including Oakland Community College, performed the *Vagina Monologues* to raise awareness and money for women's shelters.

When the show makes its three-week appearance in Detroit, Lee and Benford, both native Texans, will share the stage Jan. 23-25 with Lori Petty, who played Geena Davis's younger sister in *A League of Their Own*. They'll perform with other yet-to-be-named celebrities in Detroit and in all the cities they'll visit in their nine-month tour.

"In that way, there is a sense that the town owns that piece," said Lee.

And then there's always the question of men.

"They come up to me after the show and say, 'I didn't want to come tonight, but I'm so glad I did.' When that happens, my job is done," said Bedford.

"The main thing is that when people leave, they leave with a door open to discussion," said Lee.

And that certainly isn't hard to do. Enslar has a unique ability to combine humor and compelling drama to make her message clear. ("Down there? I haven't been down there since 1963. No, it had nothing to do with Eisenhower," begins a monologue titled "The Flood.")

"The play is really about something much bigger, it's about a social conscience," said Lee, who appeared on Broadway last year in *Not About Nightingales*. "It's rare to be involved with something that's important on so many levels."

Bedford said she was initially shocked at the response she got from women after the show. "They would come up, not saying a word and open their arms. Now, my arms are wide open, too. I need the hugs, it's our healing process."

Lee said even when she's at a Starbucks, women who've seen the show will approach her and tell her stories about rape and incest.

"I'm not a counselor, but I can hug and hold and listen," she said. "It's got to be talked about. It's like what Eve said about bacteria only growing in the dark. When you bring it to light, it dies. Bad things happen in the dark. Violence against women needs to be talked about."

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