

JET from page E1

ing. Once she speaks, she's says a mouthful, and you don't know what's going to happen."

Describing the play, Young says it's about being lonely, and people who aren't happy and are searching for something.

Both actors, Ellenstein and Young found each other when Ellenstein directed her in a show.

Together for nine years, married for 4-1/2, they make their home in Los Angeles. Both have performed at Meadow Brook Theatre before.

"We like it here," said Young.

"We've made a lot of friends," adds Ellenstein.

Geoffrey Sherman, artistic director of Meadow Brook Theatre is directing this production. "We met in Portland, Ore., and have done three shows together," said Ellenstein. "It's always great to work with him."

A courtroom is the scene of the drama played out in JET's production of "Never the Sinner."

It's a story about the first "Crime of the Century" — two teens who kill a 14-year-old boy for the thrill of it. Clarence Dar-

row, 74, defends 18-year-old Nathan Leopold, Jr., and his friend Richard Loeb, 19, in this play which takes place in Chicago during the summer of 1924.

Both boys are good looking, from affluent families and well educated. When she first read the play last spring, Evelyn Orbach, artistic director of JET, put it in her reject pile.

"It is such a negative thing," she said. "To see two young, affluent men who have everything going for them. But then I started to see all these things in the news about violent, seemingly meaningless deaths

involving young people — someone shooting up a school, kids killing their parents, and then I began thinking about it."

Besides being a great drama, Orbach thought "Never the Sinner" raised some important issues that should be discussed in the community.

"After striking the last blow," Loeb explodes into giggles. Keep calm old Buddy," he tells his friend Leopold. "It's just like swatting a fly."

The boys killed 14-year-old Bobby Franks believing they committed the perfect crime.

"They were toying with philosophy and believed they were supermen," said Orbach.

The case also represents a landmark decision about capital punishment, and looks at how the media sways public opinion.

"What's terrible is they're (Leopold and Loeb) appealing and that's appalling," said Orbach. "Girls sent them love letters."

JET is hosting community forums that will focus on some of the issues raised in "Never the Sinner," at the Aaron DeRoy Theatre after Thursday evening

performances and Sunday matinees.

Discussions will be facilitated by psychologists, media, legal, and social services professionals. "We're trying to get people who are really concerned about those issues," said Orbach. Clementine Barfield of So Sad, Save our Sons and Daughters, will be the featured speaker on Thursday, Feb. 25. She will be bringing along three or four teens.

This group was formed to help families deal with the loss of a child through violence.

Dance from page E1

poser. The composer wrote the music, the designer designed the sets and the choreographer mapped out dance movements

without consulting each other. On opening night there was a clash or a convergence of ideas.

Over the years Cunningham

has worked with composers such as John Cage, David Tudor and Brian Eno and contemporary artists such as Robert Rauschen-

berg, Frank Stella, Jasper Johns and Roy Lichtenstein. He's also experimented in film and video.

"His approach is more intellectual than emotional," Ogan said.

■ As a dancer, Merce Cunningham often seemed to defy gravity, space and time, and he tries to pass along some of that pure motion to his company of young dancers.

That intellectual approach has kept Cunningham on the cutting edge of dance and using technology to advance his choreography. With the help of scientist and choreographer Theola Schiphorst, Cunningham has been using a computer, LifeForms, to help design his dances since the late 1980s.

"He uses it for ideas," Ogan said. "I think of it as this little guy ... He'll see what he can do and try to give it to us to see if we can do that. Of course on the computer there's no gravity. The little guy can go up and make five moves in the air. We make up with what we're able to do."

As a dancer, Cunningham often seemed to defy gravity, space and time and he tries to pass along some of that pure motion to his company of young dancers. Ogan said the choreographer builds his dances an element at a time, beginning with the feet, then the torso and finally the arms. She said sometimes it seems stiff and formatted. But between the necessary time cues, Cunningham builds in moments for free movement.

"Because of the computer thing, it's really difficult to make your feet dance or even to make your feet move at all. Phrases are difficult to learn. After eight or nine arm positions, you say 'If he gives me any more arm I'll lose it,'" Ogan said.

She said it is also difficult to ignore the music sometimes. She said that usually on opening night, when dancers hear the music for the first time, they are so nervous about their movements that it isn't a problem. But as time goes on they have to fight "dancing to the music."

She said when they performed in Minnesota, they wanted to pay homage to the hometown composer, the artist formerly known as Prince, and use his music.

"It's very hard not to dance to Prince's music," she said.

Ogan will dance in several of the works this weekend. She

said "Rondo" is divided into two sections. In the first section company members never know what they're going to dance. Everyone learns all the solo and multiple parts.

"The order changes every night on who does which dance. You don't know what you're doing until that night. The B section is mayhem. The feel of the piece changes completely," she said.

At 29, Ogan is finding that dance can be wearying but rewarding.

A performance last June at the Paris Opera on a stage with a five degree rake was exhausting but "the highlight of my career."

Just as the music, sets and choreography come together, so, too, do the dancers who give themselves to Cunningham's vision of pure movement.

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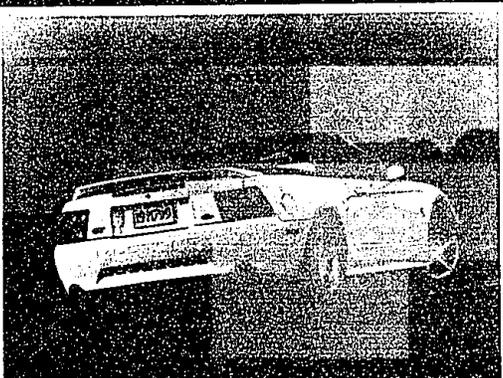
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