

# Wingrove reaches a new step

*A dance company takes a gamble*

BY PAUL HERTELENDY  
Mercury News Dance Writer

**‘W**E'RE making a transition."

That's the upbeat message from Margaret Wingrove, whose tireless work has kept modern dance alive for downtown San Jose audiences.

"When I started my company in 1982, there were nine modern-dance companies here. We are now the only one left."

This weekend, the Margaret Wingrove Dance Company presents its newly extended season at the intimate San Jose Stage Theater.

The "transition" involves diverse choreography. For the first time, the six works on the evening programs are all new, created by five company dancer-choreographers. And Wingrove, who has created 60 of the 70 or so dances performed during the company's life, has done only two of them.

The troupe is offering two distinct programs this weekend — one in the evenings — "sophisticated" is Wingrove's description — plus family matinees featuring "Peter and the Wolf" and José Ibarra's "Silly Threads."

For the evening programs, Annette Williams-Opoien has put together "The Other Side," being performed with Lori Seymour's "Take 107" (with live musicians and Jeff Gann's set design) and Wingrove's "Numb." These pieces are for the full complement of five dancers, and they feature various visual elements such as projections.

The three smaller works will be Howerton's solo for Williams-Opoien, "Message She Gave"; Wingrove's duet for Williams-Opoien and Howerton, "Tie That Binds"; and Ibarra's "Where's Thumkin?" based on children's verse, with music by Tom Waits.

The perseverance of the performers has contributed to the success of the troupe; Howerton has been with the company since the start, Williams-Opoien since 1985. 1982

Wingrove herself has changed her approach since starting the ensemble. "I came from a ballet background, just like the dancers,



José Ibarra and Michael Howerton are Peter and that Wolf

and my early work reflected it," she says. "Now I'm more theatrical, more psychological, (exploring) people and relationships."

And she sees her company diversifying even more. For example, the troupe has put together a 1994 dance-oriented calendar for sale and has scheduled a work for June, 1994, by Theron Wilson.

How does Wingrove manage her breakneck schedule, handling most of the administration along with the artistic leadership?

"Doing the choreography comes from love and expressive-

## Margaret Wingrove Dance Company

Presenting six new works

■ **Where:** San Jose Stage Theater, 490 S. First St.

■ **When:** 8 tonight-Saturday, 7:30 p.m. Sunday. And family program 2 p.m. Saturday-Sunday

■ **Tickets:** \$16-\$26

■ **Call:** (408) 993-9233

ness — It's never a chore. The other part I'd gladly give to somebody else!"

