



Lori Seymour and José Ibarra take dance to "The Other Side" in a Margaret Wingrove night of challenging art.

Dancing on the razor's edge

BY PAUL HERTELENDY
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THE MARGARET Wingrove Dance Company attacks social problems, soured relationships, drug abuse and captivity in a weekend program that marks a significant change in direction for San Jose's only modern-dance troupe.

With six new works on the program and one revival, the boy/girl duos and trios of the past have mostly given way to no-holds-barred explorations of identity, estrangement and adaptation. The programs at the Stage Theater also involve projected visuals and, in one piece, a trio of musicians performing live.

"Where Is Thumkin," by dancer/choreographer José Ibarra, ranks as the most riveting new solo work I've seen this year. Set to music by Tom Waits and performed by Ibarra himself, it presents tortured scenes from the life of an addict. An intense Ibarra acts out an angry drama of the streets, in which a social outcast finds his excruciating happiness amid shock, convulsions and offensive behavior. Reminiscent in some ways of José Limón, "Where Is Thumkin" skillfully evokes the paroxysms of alienation in the '90s.

DANCE REVIEW

Margaret Wingrove Dance Company

Presenting six premieres and one revival

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

■ **When:** 8 tonight, 7:30 p.m. Sunday

■ **Tickets:** \$16-\$26

■ **Call:** (408) 993-9233

In "Take 107," choreographer Lori Seymour explores a region somewhere between Paul Taylor's fluidity and Alwin Nikolais' detached modernism. Her masked figures emerge from a color-splotched nucleus to provide an imaginative dance-theater piece from the world of computer graphics. It is set to a live improvisation by the Three Bean Salad trio.

The two other full-company works failed to jell at the Thursday opening. Wingrove's "Numb" is a promising but very abrupt piece portraying the street life of the homeless and using slide projections of homeless people. With a debt to German expressionism, Annette Williams-Opoien's "The Other Side" baffles its audience with piles of boxes and with film footage that appears to be borrowed from another dance piece. The message is enigmatic, as Michael

Howerton dances the role of a prisoner. The other dancers may or may not represent his visions, memories, family, captors or hallucinations.

Among the smaller-scale pieces, Wingrove's "The Tie That Binds" unveils the hate-love-hate relationship between a married couple who literally tug at the cord linking them. Williams-Opoien is effective as the oppressed woman, while Howerton plays a grim hybrid of Buttafuocos and Kowalskis. Like so many people caught in moribund marriages, they seem to relish the bitterness of their tie, and neither can summon the courage to sever it.

"Message She Gave," choreographed by Howerton, is a more conventional solo piece which exploits Williams-Opoien's sinuous energy.

And in "The Sixth Day," the Howerton revival that opens the program, Lori Seymour is ravishing in the sexy Adam/Eve love dance.

The performances were well focused Thursday. And the sound system, the bane of many smaller companies, was superlative.

The company is also presenting family matinees at 2 p.m. today and Sunday, featuring "Peter and the Wolf" and Ibara's "Silly Threads."