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BATES DANCE FESTIVAL

Site-specific Atrium Project links humanity, nature

● Dozens of dancers and musicians will converge on Bates' Pettengill Hall and transform it into their stage.

By **BOB KEYES**

Staff Writer

LEWISTON — Another example of new work slated for debut at the Bates Dance Festival this month is The Atrium Project, a site-specific piece developed by New York choreographer Stephan Koplowitz and composer Robert Een, also of New York.

As many as 50 dancers and another 20 musicians will transform the three-story Perry Atrium in Pettengill Hall into a multilevel stage, incorporating into their work existing features such as

indoor trees, water fountains and walls of windows.

Still untitled, the piece will operate along the theme of the atrium itself, which is to harness natural elements of the environment — trees and water — in an indoor setting.

Because it is spread out geographically and not intended to be presented in a stage setting, audience members will be able to drift among eight distinct performances, each in a different spot in the building.

The piece will begin at approximately 9:45 p.m. on both Thursday and Friday, following the conclusion in adjacent Schaeffer Theatre of the Different Voices project, which includes works by the festival's international contingent.

Atrium dancers will beckon audience members to walk over to Pettengill Hall by dancing in the lighted windows of the atrium. Once inside,

audience members will be able to explore the atrium and experience several simultaneous performances.

Developing the piece required Koplowitz to visit the setting last fall, to make certain he found the space appealing and conducive. He did.

"I just needed to make certain I would be able to work in the space and that the space was appropriate," he says. "The design element of the space is so strong, it became what the piece is about."

And although he formed rough ideas of what his piece would look like during the visit last fall, it is still very much evolving and likely will continue to evolve until the days before the performance.

Koplowitz is best known for his urban work. His reputation is for creating grand events with large casts in big spaces, including a site-specific work for the windows of New York's Grand Central Station and a former coal plant in Germany.

AUDIENCE



Staff photo by John Ewing

Bates Dance Festival performers rehearse a piece for The Atrium Project, a site-specific work making use of Pettengill Hall's unique characteristics.