

Religious Symbols Are Background For Premiere Ballet Performance

The world premiere of an experimental ballet by Dan Jordan, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Chicago, attracted a "standing-room-only" audience recently at Mandel Hall. Danced by the Illinois Ballet company, the ballet starred Dom Orejudos, Michelle Lynn and Pamela Johnson and was presented under the direction of Richard Ellis and Christine DuBoulay.

Now director of temple activities at the Baha'i House of Worship, Wilmette, Jordan is completing his doctoral at the University of Chicago. His desire as a Baha'i to find a field of work where his results would contribute to world unity led him into an exploration of the needs of the mentally ill. While a student at Oxford University, where he was the Nebraska Rhodes scholar, Jordan learned of Jung's theory of the collective unconscious and began trying to find a way to test this theory in a non-verbal way. Jung maintained that certain symbols evoke a deep response from all people.

Jordan believed that these symbols of unity, such as those used by world religions (the Christian cross, for example, of the Star of David) could be presented through music and ballet in such a way that withdrawn, mentally-ill people could be reached and brought to a point where verbal therapy would be effective.

"My ballet is not intended just for the mentally ill," comments Jordan, with a smile.

Its theme is an ancient one, for it concerns discarding an old self for a new one. The process of intellectual and spiritual growth is often a painful one, but it is the purpose of human life and all of our great art has this theme woven into it."

Present at the ballet were members of the Committee on Human Development at the University of Chicago, as well as authorities in the field of psychiatry and the complete body of the National Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States, an administrative body of nine elected annually by all of the Baha'is in this country.

The ballet caught and held the attention of the overflow audience. A five-minute ovation at the end, with Jordan called to the stage to accept the acclaim of the audience, was followed by a brief talk in an adjoining room on the theory from which the ballet evolved.

Dr. and Mrs. Jack McKenty, of Milwaukee, entertained at a reception in Burton-Judson lounge, U. of Chicago, following the ballet, for Dan's relatives, members of the ballet company, the Committee on Human Development at the University of Chicago, and the National Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States. Mrs. Hattie Jordan, of Alliance, Nebraska, mother of the composer came for the performance, together with her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Warner Jordan, and her granddaughter, Joyce.