

DANCE PREVIEW

Terpsich Oregon

A New York choreographer reclaims a patch of her hometown with a new piece.

BY STEFFAN SILVIS
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Temporal Evidence and Other Dances

Conduit

918 SW Yamhill St., Suite 401, 777-1907

8:30 pm Saturday-Sunday, July 29-30

\$12-\$14

"[Linda Austin] has a quiet way of shattering an action into unexpected slivers."
--*Deborah Jowitt, Village Voice*

Oregon-born choreographer Linda Austin arrived at dance in a curious way. A theater graduate of Lewis & Clark College, she didn't get involved in dance until she moved to New York in the early '80s. In New York, she got mixed up with East Village improv groups at a time when that area's dance and club scene was setting new standards for performance art in America. Before long, she was appearing in more dance productions as choreographers became interested in hiring performers who weren't technically trained dancers.

Dance soon became Austin's primary focus, and she premiered her first piece of choreography in the Village in 1983. Her unique style--part controlled lyricism, part wild abandonment of rules--was forged in New York. Austin's work was produced by Danspace Project, PS 122, The Kitchen and Movement Research. Now back in Portland, Austin has thrown herself into the city's energetic dance community. Her latest work, *Temporal Evidence: 1983-2000*, opens this week at Conduit.

The work includes four pieces: the title piece, a memoir in movement reflecting on her 17 years as a choreographer; "In Search of the Real Pig," a solo section from a 1998 group piece; a new movement collage entitled "A Brand New Alias," and a work-in-progress, "The Use of Rumor."

Austin spoke to *WW* about her return to Portland.

Willamette Week: Is there a Portland style in dance, and if so, how do you fit in?

Linda Austin: There are a number of elements present in dance here. There's great humor, for one thing. Also, the work tends to be less technically based and more improvisational. I've found work here that lends context to what I've been trying to do, and I find the community very open and welcoming of my work.

How do you describe your current piece?

My interest is with movement that is raw and unfinished, movement that breaks up the vocabulary of dance. The new work is both a reflection on past pieces and an exploration of the process I go through in creating new work for the future. There's a strong visual element in my work, though currently I'm finding I've put myself into a prop hell [laughs]. I can't seem to do anything simply.

You've recently opened your own performance space.

We've taken over an old Romanian Orthodox church on Foster Boulevard at 67th. It's called Performance Works Northwest, and it will be both a rehearsal studio and a performance center. I thought it was important to help push the growth in dance and performance in Portland along. PICA and White Bird are doing an excellent job of stimulating our minds with outside work. But there's few good places outside of Conduit in town for local artists to develop on their own. I want Performance Works to be a place of nourishment for local artists.

