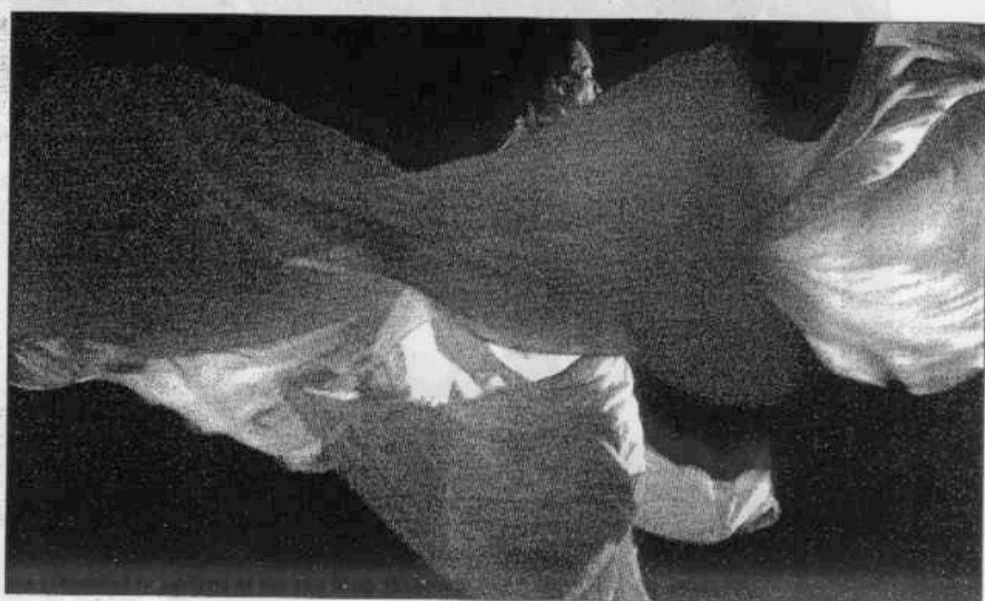
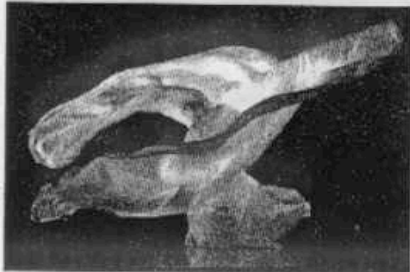
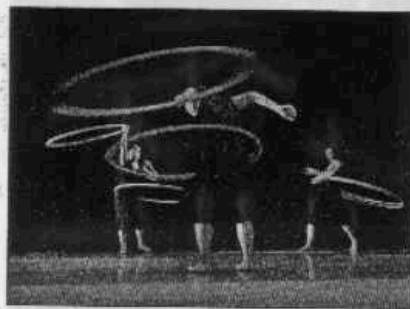


GO TO IT



Jody Sperling and her Time Lapse dance troupe are scheduled to perform at the Two River Theater in Red Bank on Sunday afternoon.

Jody Sperling brings encyclopedic approach to art form

DANCING FROM A TO Z

By KARYN D. COLLINS
DANCE WRITER

Every artist seeks a way to be unique and different, to set themselves apart from the rest of the crowd. Jody Sperling has found the answer to that age-old quest by reaching back. Way back.

Sperling, a New York-based choreographer and dance scholar, has found a niche by creating contemporary works inspired by entertainment from other centuries — everything from sideshow and trapeze acts from the 19th and early 20th centuries to solos inspired by the turn of the (last) century stage artist Loie Fuller.

Fuller created an international sensation with solos that were part light show, part dance, twirling around in front of colored lights while clad in costumes of billowing silk. Fuller, who became a star before the great modern dance pioneer Isadora Duncan, considered herself more of a stage artist than dancer. But her blending of movement and stage lighting made her a pioneer. She even invented a way to make her costumes glow in the dark.

"For me, Time Lapse (the name of her troupe) is this idea of connecting the past and the present and creating continuity. It's also about showing how much of what we're doing now is informed by these historical forces," Sperling said.

Sperling admits this is not the direction she had originally envi-

sioned for herself as a performer.

"Oh, no. I was very much a downtown modern dancer, a roll-on-the-floor, physical type of dancer," she said.

But sometimes, opportunities present themselves. Sperling, who had been

working as an editor on the International Encyclopedia of Dance, was enlisted to perform a historic work as an extension of the encyclopedia project.

"I thought it would be something like Isadora Duncan — sort of Greek-inspired. But the person who did the solo said she wanted to do something inspired by Loie Fuller," Sperling said. "It turned out to be this amazing, incredible experience for me. It was just so beautiful and so not what I was expecting."

By the mid-1990s, Sperling was creating more Fuller-inspired works based on Sperling's research. Works inspired by other earlier eras also followed.

"I started to get inspired by all these cheesy things that were built around stage tricks and gimmicks, those vaudeville acts where people did all sorts of

acrobatic tricks or did contortions," she said. "It's about more than the tricks, though. It's also about analyzing the intention and our fascination with watching these displays."

Despite the historical linkages, Sperling said she is doing more than merely re-creating history.

"The first works I did were re-creating Fuller's dances based on my research and writing papers about those dances," Sperling said. "But now, my approach is very much to think of what I do as original choreography that is inspired by the Loie Fuller concept."

"My works have echoes of history but they're not like looking at museum pieces. I think they feel contemporary."

JODY SPERLING

TIME LAPSE DANCE

WHEN: 3 p.m. Sunday

WHERE: Two River Theater, 21 Bridge Ave., Red Bank

TICKETS: \$25

INFO: (732) 345-1400



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