

COAST

REFLECTING SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S FINER LIFESTYLE | SEPTEMBER 2000

HYSTERICA DANCE COMPANY

Classic film *noir* gets spiked with pop moves and experimental punk/jazz sounds in Los Angeles choreographer Kitty McNamee's latest work. The hard-edged sexuality of McNamee's film and television work softens to a raw sensuality drawn in slinky, sensuous lines for the evening-length *Noir*, which makes its world premiere this month as part of the Summer Nights at the Ford performance series at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre in Hollywood.

Noir proved to be a creative melting pot for McNamee, who formed Hysterica Dance Company three years ago after finding herself unfulfilled by movie projects. Inspired by a life-long love of old films, she collaborated with fellow Los Angeles artists Julian Goldberger, Tim Labor and Grant Krajecki to create an abstract world of cops and femme fatales with evocative film and music sequences for a contemporary take on the pulp genre. Director/filmmaker and Independent Spirit Award Nominee Goldberger intersperses nature – tigers feeding in the zoo, water droplets slipping off a palm frond like blood – with urban shots of a girl running along a chain-link fence and close-ups of the dancers in Chinatown, to set the mood for McNamee's choreography. "We wanted to stay away from *noir* stereotypes," says McNamee, who calls Goldberger's contributions "brilliant." "So we went for the heart of it, ambient images – in color and black and white – that would reflect *noir's* essence."

Along with music from the movie *Vertigo* – "Scene d' Amour" – and maverick musician John Zorn's *noir*-inspired "Spillane," McNamee credits composer Tim Labor's original score – "a juxtaposition of lyrical violins with jarring technological sounds" – and the costumes of up and coming L.A. designer Krajecki, founder of Grey Ant fashions, for deepening the whole experience. "I feel so fortunate to have so many amazing people helping me with this project. It makes it so much richer for the audience," McNamee said during a recent phone inter-

view from her home in Los Angeles. "Grant has created these really beautiful costumes that fit my aesthetic; the dancers can move in them, but they still look like people, which I love. It's very important to me to approach the dancers from a human point of view rather than as bodies, just as I approach my choreography more on a psychological level than as a pure storyteller.

"Although some of the individual pieces in *Noir* have a narrative, the whole show deals with more of an abstracted theme of the genre. The core, for me, is that sense of isolation, something that I've found is still relevant in Los Angeles these days: one person, or a couple, up against the world with things deteriorating around them. There's a sense of spiralling down . . . I see a lot of people who seem alienated in this city, and it sparked something for me."

Hysterica Dance Company performs Noir on September 8th at 8 p.m. at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre, 2580 Caheunga Blvd. East in Hollywood. For tickets call (323) 461-3673. – Pamela Diamond

Ryan Heffington and Tom Serink of the Hysterica Dance Co.

