

# Sonic richness overshadows dance in 'Labyrinth'

By Diana Scott

Gracious good taste and sonic richness are the qualities that predominate in "Labyrinth," the latest collaboration between Barbara Feldman and Dancers, and composer Dwight Andrews, with performances tonight and Sunday afternoon at the Educational Center for the Arts, 55 Audubon St.

Feldman, a ballet-trained modern dancer, teamed up last year with Andrews, a New Haven musician/composer whose range spans from jazz to classical. Together, they produced "Chant of Saints," a set piece with an improvised feel, to Andrews' complex and colorful score.

This year, Feldman has commissioned a second, sumptuous sound text by Andrews.

"Labyrinth" draws not only on the wide range of instruments and rhythms used previously, but adds an overlay of poetry — Federico Garcia Lorca's "Ballad of the Little Square" — which is alternately spoken, whispered, sung and chanted between the music and the movement.

There is much to enjoy in this extremely ambitious project; yet the dance emerges as a weak counterpoint to the strong, inventive score.

To be sure, there are some beautiful, if fleeting visual moments, particularly the lovely, sinking trio (danced by Amy Kennedy-Wooten, Margi Caplan, and Fran Smyer-Dubrow). Tall and vulnerable, Kennedy-Wooten moves here with a depth that matches the music and text's resonance.

While Feldman shows her craft by managing with an ensemble of five to fill time and space with varied patterns, much of the movement is peripheral rather than integral, frontal rather than three dimensional, safely controlled rather than expressively inventive.

Also on the program, "Chant of Saints" is lovely to look at and listen to. Performed by Margi Caplan, Tom Haskell, Kennedy-Wooten, Suzanne Serviss and Fran Smyer-Dubrow, it opens with an airy lightness, the sweeping reach and measured innocences of a modern ballet.

Flawed partnering, however, marred the finale, as did too-tightly geometric floor patterns, which fought the openness of the score.

In "Off the Court," Feldman

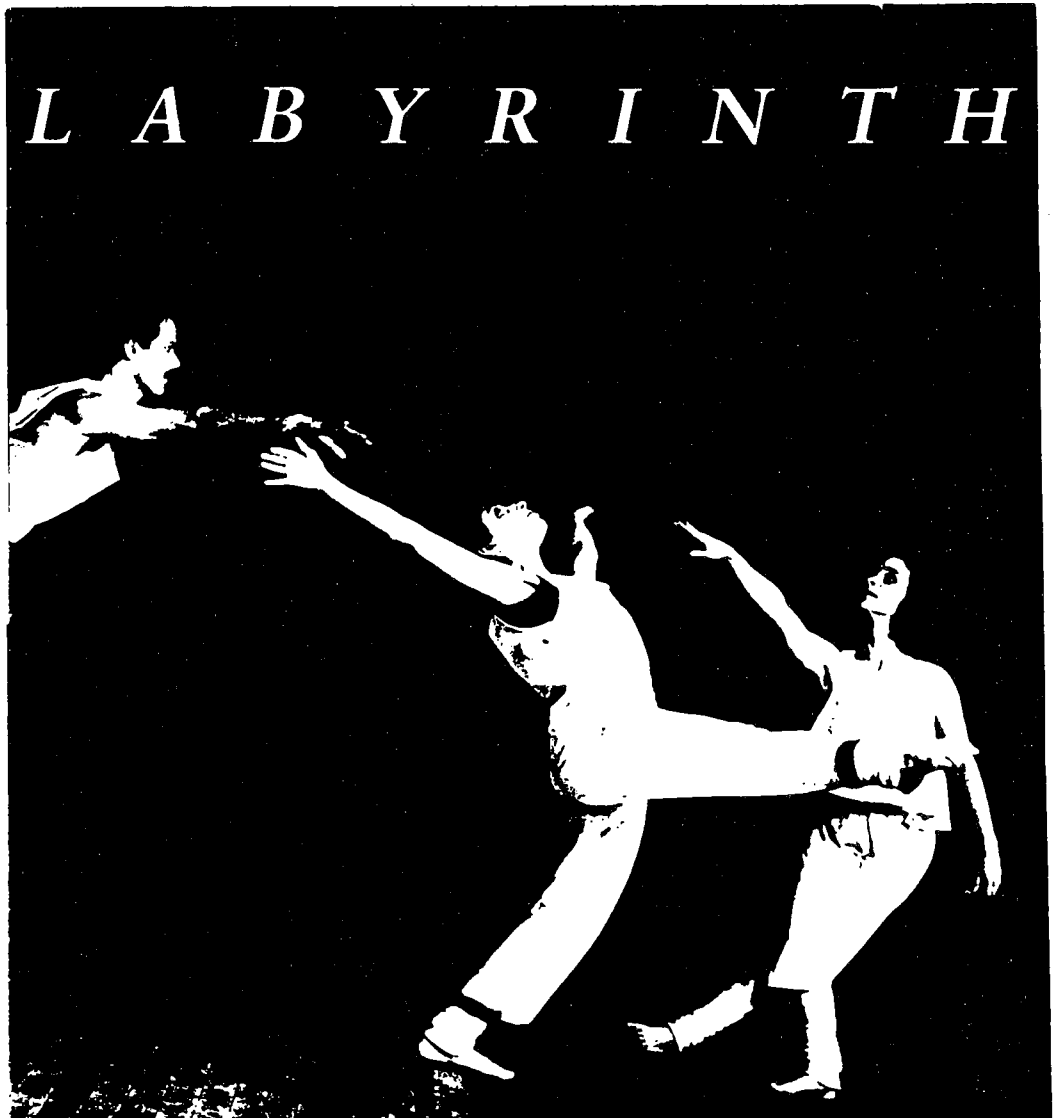
## DANCE REVIEW

has used the juxtaposed courtly, heraldic brass sound of Corelli, against the squeak of sneakers and swish of squash racquets, to create an exuberant and witty, athletic metaphor for our modern "courtly" rituals.

And in "Sisters," choreographed last year to a voice collage of real-life sisters talking on National Public Radio, she evokes the many-sided interaction — compet-

itiveness, protectiveness, companionship and solidarity, even in conflict — that characterize this blood relationship. The most fully realized of these seven cute and poignant variations was "Garden of Eden," danced by Caplan and Serviss, perched like two mournfully isolated cranes, their movement fusing with the rich sound shadings of improvisational vocalist Kalpan Devi-Sreiber and musician Jahmes Anthony Finlayson.

Their accompaniment, in itself, was worth the price of admission.



## Barbara Feldman & Dancers

Margi Caplan  
Tom Haskell  
Amy Kennedy-Wooten  
Suzanne Serviss  
Fran Smyer-Dubrow

April 23, 24 & 25, 1987 at 8pm  
April 26 at 2pm  
The Educational Center for the Arts  
Orange & Audubon Streets  
New Haven