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U.W.M. Dancers Perform at Governor's Mansion

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by Curtis L. Carter

Art and politics are in partnership today on many different levels. Governor and Mrs. Martin Schreiber have joined in the trend by their performance-exhibitions at the Governor's mansion in Madison. A group of dancers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison performed

four works in a concert of "Dance-
artworks in the Environment,"
July 30, at the the mansion.

The beautiful site on the lake
front offered a natural setting
equalled only by the planned out-
door theaters of ancient Greece.
Audience members included not
only the governor and invited
guests from around the state, but
also the Sunday afternoon boaters
who happened to be sailing on the
lake. Of the four works performed
I saw only the last two, "Zero,
19/8" by C. James Wright and Lonnie
Gordon's "Phrases for Louise."

"Zero" is a processional ritual
performed by six dancers in white,
carrying long poles with banners.
They begin at the dock and process
along the lower bank, eventually
arriving on the lawn, before the
guests seated on the south patio
of the governor's mansion. Each
dancer undertakes a series of spins,
and then the ensemble dances and
creates a series of formations with
poles moving high in the air. For
several minutes the dancers arrange
their props into different group-
ings, some very somber, some
showing lightness. At the end the
dancers exit over the bank and
disappear. The effect is quietly
moving. It is not especially pro-
found, but the images are very
clear. The setting is especially
suitable for this work. (See the
score for this work, opposite
page.)

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"Phrases for Louise, 1968-75" is
intended as a tribute to Louise
Kloepper, former chairman and
teacher at U. W. Madison. Gordon
states that the piece is built on
the process of selecting a phrase
or gesture of movement from every
dance created by him since 1968.
The dance consists of an integra-
tion of these various phrases and
gestures. Gordon appears in a
green bathing suit carrying a
Japanese parasol and a mat. He
rolls out the mat deliberately,
opens the green parasol and begins
to walk. He turns, faces the
audience, spreads his arms, bows.
He then turns to a tree, and raises
his arms in reverence. Leaps,
sculpturesque postures, and hand
springs, follow. Near the middle
of the dance, the sail and motor
boats on the lake begin to move
quietly away. Returning to the
mat, Gordon calls out, "Louise,
Louise." He completes the cere-
monial with Japanese-like economy
of movement. Gesturing with a
sense of homage, he throws a pen-
sive kiss, picks up the props, and
departs over the hill.

Gordon's work is polished, complete,
and well thought out. There is no
mistaking the mood and the character
of the piece. It carries strong
tones of homage and retrospection.
It is questionable, however, whether
the intimate, reflective character
of this work was suitable to per-
form in the outdoor environment.
I think it would be more effective
in a smaller, chamber setting.