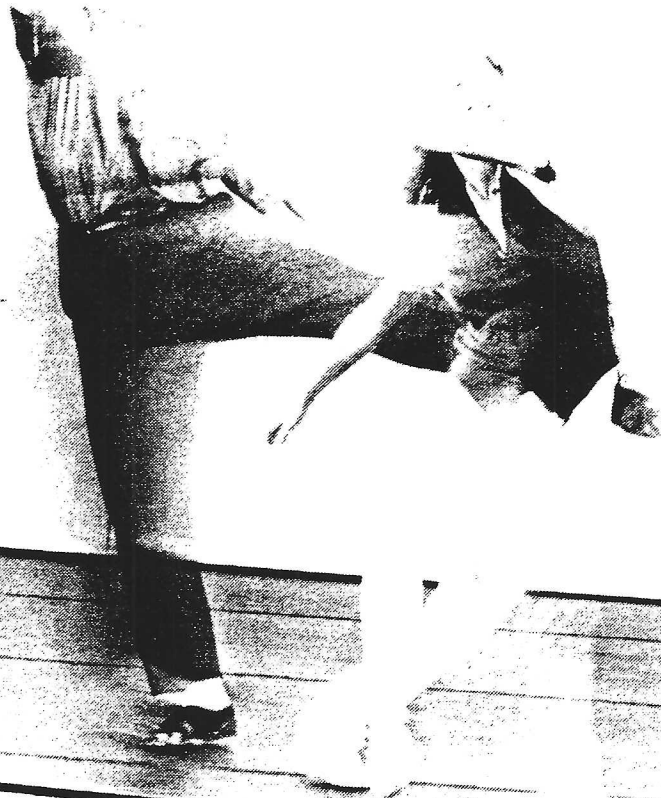


Local Dancers Have a Ball in Opening of Series



PHOENIX SECTION 2

April 9, 1987, THE PHOENIX,

BY JESSICA PORTNER

Martha Bower's solo "Typedance" develops equally compelling themes. A monologue in motion, she illustrates how the "left" and "right" sides of a typewriter represent "two different worlds." With the clever script by Jane Kirschner, Bowers divides up the letters and symbols of the keyboard, marking words with her feet: "On the left you can 'eat' or 'starve' but there is no 'food.' On the right there is no 'ERA'."

Like a game of Twister, she curves and turns, never crossing the red line dividing the keys. On this machine, there are no "creeps," no "idiots," no "Reagan," no "KGB." And despite the fact that the left has "war" and the right can "kill," there are no "guns," no "weapons" and no "death." This ingenious piece, a word play with movement, brings the mechanics of our often typewritten language to life.

In "Martial Dances," Bowers addresses a powerful form of movement. Four women in black gi, a martial arts fighting garb, enter the stage stretching and breathing in synchronized sharpness. Joined by four other women in pink and blue, they weave together, forming complementary pairs. The contrast of one group's quick, cutting movements, accented by Mozart's "German Dances," with the other's whimsical softness, proved an interesting power play.

Alternating the serious and strong with the playful and delicate, the women dance together leaping and turning, some wielding sticks, the others in tutu. The dance concludes with a partnership in which, to synthesizer music, the martial artist teaches a tutu-less dancer, with clenched fists and taut frame, about the power and beauty of her motion.

In the next piece, Bowers' "Blue Heaven," her choreography hits its peak. A trio of father, daughter and girlfriend are sitting on folding chairs, costumed in bright blue and black, patterned with white lightning bolts. Jockeying for their man's attention the two females tangle, twist and push. To Brooks Williams' bouncy melodic beat, the three break into pairs and separate, clasp and release. With his daughter, the man plays tag, flips and gives piggy back rides until he is lured into a spin by his lover. With these gifted dancers, Bowers choreographs the trips and trials of a complicated threesome with originality and humor.