

# Spinning 'Straw' into performance

BY EMILY VAN CLEVE  
For the Journal

Johanna Hongell-Darsee is taking a walk through the natural world in her latest original dance piece "Straw."

The Finnish-born dancer, who now calls Santa Fe home, partners with her husband, bass and guitar player Scott Darsee, to present the multidiscipline performance piece at the New Mexico Dance Coalition's 16th Annual Choreographers Showcase at the Railyard Performance space next weekend.

Hongell-Darsee is one of a group of dancers at the showcase presenting original works representing many genres of dance. Her training in theater and mime took place in Paris at the Lecoq School. Fifteen years of study were devoted to classical Indian dance in Paris and in India. She also lived in Sweden, where she ran a dance company for 10 years that included storytelling, dance, mime, classical Indian dance and theater. Combining various artistic forms of expressions within one movement piece is a trademark.

"When I create a dance I use the inner techniques of classical Indian dance rather



**IN DANCE SHOWCASE:** Johanna Hongell-Darsee will present an original dance at the upcoming "DanceWorx 2002: Offerings." Shown with her is her husband, Scott Darsee.

than the exact gestures and costumes," she explains. "I study the characters in the dance very carefully. In 'Straw' I'm walking through nature and observing plants and animals. I try to visualize what the plants and animals and dance their characters by using some of the traditional steps and poses found in Indian dance."

Emotion is at the root of David Penn Henry's choreography. The Santa Fe resident has been studying with modern dancer Julie Brett Adams and is performing in the showcase for the third time. Even

though there are some athletic moves in his new piece "Going On," Henry is most interested in evoking his own feelings and those of the audience.

"'Going On' began as a piece where I combined form and movement that were pleasing to me," he explains. "As the dance evolved it started to take on meaning. 'Going On' is about going on through struggle. I envelope myself in my heart and find a place that allows me to go on. My life is always in a process of healing and this dance reflects my healing process."

Other dance offerings

## If you go

**WHAT:** New Mexico Dance Coalition's concert, "DanceWorx 2002: Offerings"

**WHEN:** 7:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 15, and Saturday, Nov. 16

**WHERE:** Railyard Performance Center, 1811 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe

**HOW MUCH:** Tickets are \$10 adults; \$8 students, sold only at the door

come from Albuquerque choreographer Bill Evans, who has asked Kyla Wallace to perform "Prelude" and "Sarabande" from his work "Bach Dances," and Julie Brett Adams, whose high-energy piece "Driven" is danced by a quartet. Haitian dance fused with modern movement is presented by Elise Smith Gent in her work "Walking a Line." "Passage," an African dance quartet choreographed by Sassy Ross, represents the journey from slavery to freedom.

North Indian and hip-hop dance pieces also are part of the eclectic mix. In all, 12 choreographers showcase their lighthearted and serious works.