

THE KITCHEN

Video Music Dance Performance Film Literature

★ BEST OF STAGE ★

A rose is a

Byron Suber's dance fables.
By Caroline Palmer

If the Brothers Grimm met up with Moliere, their progeny would undoubtedly have been Byron Suber. In his recent works, *The Despair of Shoes Waltz* and *I'm a Frayed Knot*, Suber plays in the realm of experimental theater, giving life to a host of bustiered wenches, sheet-clad spirits and pouty-mouthed playboys. Now, in *Three Roses and a Sacred Cow*, Suber returns to dance, but with a twist — it's a fairy tale gone awry.

"I get a lot of inspiration from movies, especially most everything Elizabeth Taylor has been in," says Suber. "I really love *XYZ* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* She represents beauty but is crass and vulgar at the same time." Like Taylor, the ugly and beautiful are often cast together in Suber's works, yet underneath the bawdy dialogue, brash movement and humorous costumes lies a message that each audi-

ence member understands.

Three Roses is a departure for Suber: it's "mostly dance, hardly any talking." The work opens with Eleanor, "a dominatrix, a magician, a guardian angel. Her three wards are the three roses; they are novices in this world," says Suber, "and Eleanor introduces them to this harsh environment. She tries to force them into gender roles, but they have trouble fitting in. They finally convince her to absolve power and follow their path." Throughout the work, the ingenue roses encounter adversity, those who force them to choose, to change, to fit in. "The dominatrix is dressed as hardcore; she kicks us around, puts us in boxes that turn out to be incubation chambers, she bashes us around." Suber adds with a laugh: "it's what I think the real world is like."

The fable-like piece is filled with "magic, rituals, symbols from other

cultures." Suber believes that today's culture "is an amalgamation of other cultures. Culture is a present-day thing created by what's around you. It's all about the way people think." *Three Roses* is "a fun piece, very colorful."

"Moving is something I want to get back to, apart from experimental theater," says Suber, on his decision to return to dance-based work. "The climate in the East Village has not been to do dance but more performance work. My background, however, is in strict ballet training. And now I'm bringing the theater influence to my dance work." Suber will be joined by dancers Juliette Burrows, Lisa Heijn, Patrick Rawlins and pianist Vivian Trimble. The evening will also include Suber's 1985 duet *Bad Timing* and the new solo *Finale for a Chemical Engineer*. At The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St., Jan. 9-12, at 8:30 p.m. ★

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