



**John Kelly & Company:  
Paved Paradise**

14th Street Playhouse  
Atlanta, Georgia  
September 18

cert with one another. Yet these people look to- tally disjointed as they hop from foot to foot, os- tensibly in rhythm to the poly-rhythmic motions of their hands. Their bodies don't look as if they know what to do with the middle; it jerks from side to side and front to back with every idio- cratic style possible.

Untrained bodies aside, the strict dis- cussion, which calls for absolute precision in the limbs creating the sounds, is a bit of a unison movement performance. It's a profes- sional dance company, and I'm not sure I'm myself wondering if they're really as accom- plished with their movements as they seem. My time is up.

groups pare down to a single woman. She is a neophyte, and I'm not sure I'm seeing modern dance for the first time, found myself changing from curious to hardened dance-ophiles. By the end of the work, the men's bare chests fascinated my friend as she noticed the physicality of the movement and their increas- ingly deep breaths. Her daughter was so taken that she exclaimed on the MARTA train ride home that seeing dance should be like going to the dentist: everyone should attend a performance at least twice a year. Thank you *Regina Mater*.

**Of final note is a little gem shown in the win- dows at 52 Broad Street. Part of the Arts Festival's "Art in Odd Places" and indeed an offering in an unusual place, light acted as the icing on the evening cake. Created by Nicole Liveratos, one Atlantian who generally has work included in the Festival, the projected film of a dance stopped pe- destrians who gazed up to the second story in de- light. Refreshing in its incongruence, light cap- tured the imagination and offered a glimpse into the realm of possibilities for alternative presenta- tions of dance in Atlanta. Unfortunately, light was the only work created by an Atlantian, but while I miss the homegrown companies, I must admit that the ability to see international companies rep- resented in the Arts Festival of Atlanta thrills me.**

Susan L. Wiesner, Mableton, Georgia

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Left to right: PPS Danse, Pôles; S.W.A.R.M.; John Kelly, Paved Paradise (photos courtesy of Arts Festival of Atlanta).

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**ART PAPERS**  
INSIDE THE OUTSIDE: RE-THINKING FOLK ART

...rock and  
...of the show  
...folk singer, accom-  
...solic muses Vincent  
...ron on guitar, bass, and  
...and Georgia O'Keeffe (Zecca  
...boards and backing vocals). Here  
...friendly and idealistic, as Kelly & Com-  
...their way through the fluid chord pro-  
...sions of Mitchell's optimistic early work.

The aura changes dramatically after intermis- sion, however, as the folk-activist mural that previously served as a backdrop is replaced by an eerily moonlit painting of a backyard swimming pool, the kind found behind nearly every rock star's barely occupied mansion. When Kelly solemnly emerges out of the darkness into a spotlight in front of the pool dressed in a cosmopolitan evening dress and glitter-drenched heels, one doesn't have to be an expert on Mitchell's life to figure out the change in her perception. Life has gotten complicated for the folk singer turned star, and the increasingly complex chants and minor- chord shifts that this dark series of songs contains evokes the pain and loneliness of addiction, struggle, and loss.

Like most genuinely provocative artists, Kelly imparts his own personal meanings through his homage, taking advantage of the audience's emo- tional susceptibility to work his AIDS-related agenda into the context of Mitchell's despair. It's an effective strategy, to say the least, taking one to that place of universal compassion that is too of- ten neglected in the cultural stereotyping that per- vades our society. It also stimulates some intrigu- ing ambiguities of identity and character, as one is not quite sure who the performer really is— Mitchell or Kelly. At a certain moment the confu- sion is particularly poignant, as Kelly dons a large flower-covered hat that he has performed in at New York's annual Wigstock festival, telling the audi- ence this fact—in an obvious break with charac- ter—while maintaining Mitchell's inflection and voice. It is here, when Kelly's own personality starts emerging out of Mitchell's, that the sense of pu- rity and clarity in this obsession turned perfor- mance becomes most apparent, filling one with a fleeting sense of wonder and inspiration.