Pilobolus ‘adopts’ ADF’s Reinhart

BY SUSAN BROILI
Special to The Herald-Sun

DURHAM — Pilobolus considers ADF director Charles Reinhart a member of their group as well as a presenter extraordinaire.

“He’s been an inspiration for us in our lives. Charlie has really been instrumental in seeing our work as contributing to the modern dance story,” said Michael Tracy, one of the troupe’s artistic directors.

Or as Reinhart has put it: “They were one of those extraordinary mushrooms that grew up under the modern dance tree, but was not connected to it.”

In a remembrance this season of Jonathan Wolken, co-founder of Pilobolus with Moses Pendleton in 1971, who died on June 13, 2010, Reinhart also noted the first time he saw the troupe perform in 1973 at ADF then located in New London, Conn. “It was so unbelievably original and so brilliantly naïve that I realized this was a complete breakaway,” Reinhart said.

The troupe made such an impression that the festival has invited them to perform every season since with this summer their 38th appearance.

Over the years, Reinhart has encouraged the troupe and through ADF commissioned 24 of the 31 works they have premiered at the festival. “That kind of support is few and far between,” Tracy said. “I think he’s unparalleled in the world of presenters.”

And, the troupe has benefited from the work of Reinhart and his late wife and former ADF co-director, Stephanie, in “opening up international doors in both directions” by bringing international companies here as well as sending American modern dance troupes and teachers abroad, Tracy said.

The ADF has sent Pilobolus to such countries as Russia and Korea, he added.

Tracy said he had so many fond memories of the troupe’s relationship with Reinhart over almost four decades that he couldn’t choose just one.

Reinhart vividly remembers one of the troupe’s dances from the past and that’s why he asked them to do it during this his last and 43rd season as ADF director. “I was blown away by it,” Reinhart said of the 1975 “Untitled.”

The dance spans the relationships between men and women from birth to old age and includes the image of women, who appear to grow taller thanks to nude male partners hidden under the women’s skirts.

Pilobolus hasn’t performed the dance for a while. “The dancers are excited about reviving one of our classics,” Tracy said.