



CANADA'S CAPITAL CAPPIES — SHOW NO. 15

Tomorrow: Lisgar Collegiate Institute, 29 Lisgar St., will stage its official Cappies production, *Damn Yankees*, a musical all about the Senators — the Washington Senators baseball team, that is, Joe Boyd makes a deal with the devil to help his team, but even the love of the game can't compensate for the love he has lost.

Memorable musical numbers include *Shoeless Joe* and *A Man Doesn't Know*. Curtain goes up at 7:30 p.m. There are also performances Friday and Saturday at the same time.

Cappies critics will review Friday's performance. Call 613-239-2696 for ticket information and to confirm show times. Watch for the Cappies reviews in the Citizen's Arts pages next week and find out more at www.ottawacitizen.com/features/cappies2008.

Instructor on a mission to teach Horton technique

BY DAYANTI KARUNARATNE

Scattered in sweats across the studio floor, the dancers stand casually, toned arms crossed and brows furrowed. They're sizing up a new style of contemporary dance, one that pushes them out of their comfortable plié and calls for new, peculiar poses.

"It's like there's a string between your hands," says instructor Michelle McKernan from the front of the room, "and the string stays taut!" Her arms are held straight above her head, stick-'em-up style.

It's the second day of a special workshop at the Ottawa School of Dance, the city's only professional school of contemporary dance. The students are getting a taste of the Lester Horton technique, a style McKernan describes as "moving yoga."

McKernan, 30, has made it her mission to learn the largely unperformed Horton technique and bring it to Canada. Eight years ago, she spent a summer in New York City, studying the form at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

In Canada, generally the closest thing to Horton is African dance, similar with its polyrhythms and bold arm movements. But this summer, the Toronto native returned to the Ailey school to become a certified Horton instructor.

In addition to African dance influences, the now-deceased Horton was also inspired by aboriginal dance. This aspect can be seen in his powerful leaps and lavish use of percussion.

Perhaps what sets the Horton technique apart from other contemporary styles is



WAYNE CUDDINGTON, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Michelle McKernan, centre front, is a guest instructor teaching a Horton workshop at The School of Dance.

the fact that most movements are made with legs parallel to each other.

The Horton technique is meant to counter the "turning out" of legs and hips in ballet that often leads to injury. Everyone can benefit from this kind of corrective alignment, McKernan says.

And now, anybody can, as the Glebe Community Centre has added two classes using the Horton technique to its slate of spring programs.

The classes began yesterday, but spaces are still available.

Mary Tsai-Davies, executive director at the Glebe Neighbourhood Activity Group, says the classes add an important, professional element to the centre's lineup.

"It's something that would be a bit more challenging in that it promotes growth and strength," Tsai-Davies says. "I'm going to take it!"