

"Blessed Spirits" @1978, "Weaving Garlands" @1980, "Thanksgiving" @1979 Margaretta K. Mitchell

Margaretta K. Mitchell Dance for Life and Berkeley Images

magine a Greek temple high on a hillside set against the golden light of the setting sun.

Through the columns dancers enter, crowns of spring flowers on the younger heads, garlands of flowers in the hands of the older dancers. The line of bodies is traced by flowing scarves and tunics, their pastel colors and bright flowers blending in motion like a spring garden tossed in breezes. The dancers turn and leap and fill the court with strands of dance woven in an intricate pattern. Hanging their garlands, their offerings, on the columns, they greet the audience, arms raised. The Spring Festival has begun.



These words by Berkeley photographer Margaretta Mitchell introduce Dance for Life, a portfolio of photography exhibited in the lobby tonight. These photographic images of the Isadora Duncan California dance legacy at Berkeley's Temple of Wings provided the inspiration for Jean Pascal Beintus' Berkeley Images, which receives its world premiere this evening.

Margaretta has devoted twenty years to photographing dance at Berkeley's architectural gem, the Temple of Wings. "In this temple is a living connection to the past, to the turn of the century, to the great dancer Isadora Duncan and through her vision to ancient Greece," comments Margaretta, whose photography of the dance celebrates Berkeley as the Athens of the West. "Home to the Boynton-Quitzow family for almost a century, the Temple stood for

"Sülgwynn Quitzow, Spring Festival" @1972, Margaretta K. Mitchell

an interweaving of art and life, a fusion of nature and culture. At the time, Berkeley was striving to form a domestic utopia. Home as a source of the arts—in this case dance—was a new idea. Thus the Temple gave future generations a priceless vision of the experience of dance as a metaphor for life itself."

Her photographs were the subject of a 1985 Oakland Museum exhibition and were later published as a portfolio, a testament to the ideals of the California culture, exemplified by Duncan and her first American follower, Florence Boynton, who shared Duncan's vision of "freedom of body and spirit." The same images will be shown at the Christensen-Heller Gallery at 5831 College Avenue in Oakland through March 11.