

# Entertainment

## Les Sortileges debuts Saturday

□ A taste of England, Turkey, Yugoslavia, others set for U of L

Dance, like music, is a universal language. And when the two are combined, they can be almost as enjoyable as a trip around the world.

That's exactly what's proposed Saturday, when Canada's national folkloric dance company makes its

Lethbridge debut at the University Theatre.

Les Sortileges, a hit at Expo 86 in Vancouver and the Olympic Arts Festival in Calgary, will bring a taste of England, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Ireland, Mexico, the U.S. and even Canada to their 8 p.m. presentation.

Their first southern Alberta appearance, a Family Treats series event sponsored by The Lethbridge Herald, comes after a quarter-century of quietly building a profes-

sional reputation. Behind this story is the persistence of founding artistic director Jimmy Di Genova, still at its heart.

"Folk dance was the source of ballet and other techniques," he says. "I believe it has its place on stage as a legitimate art form."

And although he based his small company in Montreal, De Genova maintains it must reflect the traditions of people from all nationalities who have come to make Canada their new home.

"In Quebec and Canada, the reality is multi-ethnic," he says. "My preoccupation is not only to preserve a heritage, but to showcase its artistic value onstage."

His company's name, which translates to "sorcery" or "magic" in English as well as Italian, Spanish and French, reflects the excitement generated by many of Canada's uni-cultural dance ensembles, be they Ukrainian or Greek or Scottish.

Les Sortileges, however, "specializes" in almost everything from Hassidic wedding dances from Poland, to a flatfooted "old men's dance" from Mexico.

The 18-member company includes many Canadian favorites in its repertoire of more than 200 routines, from the step dances of Ireland and sword dances from England, to traditional jigs from Quebec. And the costumes are just as colorful as the dances themselves.

"I do triple research before I add a work to the repertoire," the director says. "I study the quality of the choreography, the costumes and the music."

And authenticity doesn't stop there, says Toronto Star dance critic William Littler. "Di Genova has clearly seen to it they are all coached in detail, not only in the various steps but in the social contexts informing them."

Dance fans at Saturday's show will be offered a wide-ranging program with everything from an American square dance and a captain's dance from the Gaspé region, to an Irish pub routine.

Reserved-seat tickets, priced from \$6 for children (12 and under) to \$14.50 for adults, are available from the U of L Box Office, 329-2616. Discounts are offered students and seniors as well.



**LES SORTILEGES** includes a taste of Ireland, Mexico, the U.S. and even Canada in its presentation.