sent, some of whom you are communicating to. Let's quickly pass over some of the obvious details which we don't have the space here to go into much. You need collective agreement on the political propositions of your demonstration (I didn't say any of these details were easy...). You need to organize resources: demonstrations cost money. You need a competent staff (yourselves) to handle the myriad of details. You need disciplined outreach to involve many communities of people in the expression of the demands and propositions. You need a great deal of literature and publicity. You need to talk to the police and you need toilets. Medical things, food, water and good weather help. You need many, many meetings--but that's o.k.--people get to know each other and get work done in meetings. People, unlike wasps, are social creatures.

Here, however, we are going to concentrate on the democratic art of demonstrations. Because, a political protest is a cultural demonstration.

There is no contradiction between a festival and a serious display of militancy. With our demonstrations we are not in rehearsal to be victims in history, we are in rehearsal to be the community of democracy--people's power--in history. Our demonstrations are saying what's in the way. The street performances described above and everything else mentioned (and left out) of this publication are all part of the vital experience of a demonstration. Each individual at a demonstration is a giant of meaning.

Demonstrations have beginnings, middles, and ends. You start out, march, and rally in a final event. Every part must be expressive, must communicate. Each part must be understood and imagined as part of an enormous community performance. When you gather, gather to see art: poetry, theater, music, puppetry, dance--the issues are on display and made real because manifest in expressive (entertaining) form. The gathering is an exchange among friends, making new acquaintances, LEARNING about the different people and what faces their communities. Listen to a couple of informative speeches, make some speeches of your own. Give away handouts. Find out the route of the march. Organize your affinity groups. Rehearse some chants. Consolidate your anger.

The march--a procession--should go through communities and neighborhoods you want to communicate with. The people seeing the march should wish they were in it. The world belongs to the people marching--or at least the future does. The name of this dance is anger.

At the end of the march, the demonstration culminates in a community expression. Remember! At no point should a demonstration ever become boring. Speakers have a responsibility to give human testimonials about the lives of people, not poorly uttered polemics which kill the spirit. The final rally should be a mass public form, a street theater play writ large. Use the public forms people know in their lives and histories: public trials, auctions, quilting bees, sports events. The culminating event should transform the errors of the present ways into a new human promise. If there is something evil plaguing the world it must be exorcised or put on trial. Create performance events which replace the lies of the present condition with the truth of a future.

And then the demonstration returns to the participation of the people. In a festival of performance and community. Like a carnival. Remember that a carnival was the assertion of the possibility of a full stomach and a happy life against the deprivations of hunger, cold, terror, senseless death. It was a reminder that a time of scarcity would be replaced by a time of plenty.

The demonstration does not end when the buses leave. The experience of the community gathered in the demonstration must continue in the different communities where people live. Go home and make more street theater.

POLITICAL DANCE?

THE "COMPARSA" IS A TRADITIONAL PART OF LATIN AMERICAN FESTIVALS, PROCESSIONS AND MARCHS AND HAS ALMOST BECOME A TRADITION IN CENTRAL AMERICAN DEMONSTRATIONS IN THIS COUNTRY AS WELL. USUALLY DONE WITH A CORE GROUP OF ABOUT 10 DANCERS, IT HAS THE POTENTIAL OF DRAWING IN SCORES OF OTHER PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT. THE MOVEMENTS ARE BASED ON THE PUERTO RICAN BOMBA DANCE OR OTHER AFRICAN DERIVED LATIN AMERICAN FORMS. THESE DANCES ARE HIGHLY RHYTHMIC, AND ORIGINATE IN THE STRUGGLES OF AFRICAN SLAVES FOR THEIR FREEDOM. THE ELEMENTS OF THESE FORMS; UNITY, CONNECTION TO THE EARTH, ANGER, AND EMPOWERMENT CREATE A POWERFUL AVENUE FOR EXPRESSION.

TO ORGANIZE A COMPARSA IT IS NECESSARY TO LOCATE A DANCER OR GROUP OF DANCERS FAMILIAR WITH THIS STYLE OF MOVEMENT AND INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THE DEMONSTRATION. MEET WITH THEM AND EXPLAIN THE POLITICS AND ISSUES OF THE EVENT. EXPRESS TO THEM THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATORY CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AT THE EVENT. ONE MONTH BEFORE THE DEMONSTRATION DISTRIBUTE A FLYER ANNOUNCING THE CREATION OF A CONTINGENT + REHEARSAL TIMES FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN BEING PART OF THE "CORE" (PUBLICIZE IN DANCE SCHOOLS, REHEARSAL STUDIOS, ART GALLERIES, THEATRES, COMMUNITY CENTERS, ETC..) AT THE REHEARSAL(S) THE LEAD DANCERS CAN TEACH SOME OF THE MOVEMENTS AND EXPLAIN THE HISTORY AND TRADITION OF THEIR PARTICULAR DANCE FORMS. ON THE MORNING OF THE DEMONSTRATION MEET EARLY TO ESTABLISH WHERE THE CONTINGENT WILL START + TO ENCOURAGE OTHER PEOPLE TO JOIN IN. SOMETIMES HOLDING A "MINI-WORKSHOP" ON THE MORNING OF THE EVENT AT THE DEMONSTRATION WILL PULL IN MORE PARTICIPANTS.

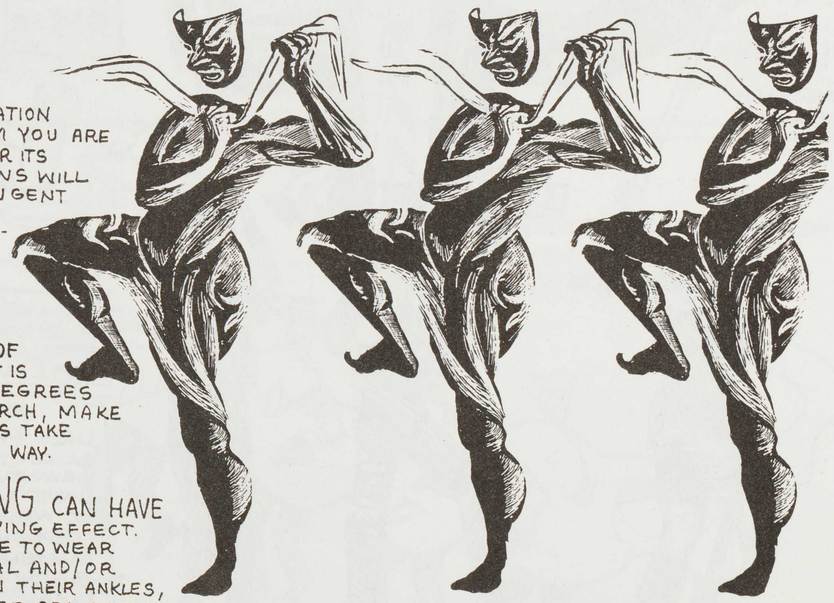
TWO OTHER IMPORTANT ELEMENTS ARE MUSIC AND STREAMERS. RECRUIT A GROUP OF AT LEAST 4 AFRICAN DRUMMERS TO BE THE "CORE" OF MUSICIANS. ENCOURAGE OTHER MUSICIANS TO PLAY MARACAS, TAMBOURINES, WHISTLES, CYMBALS, AND WOOD BLOCKS. HAVE OTHER HOMEMADE CHEAP INSTRUMENTS (CANS WITH DRIED BEANS INSIDE, STICKS, ETC..) TO PASS OUT TO WILLING PARTICIPANTS ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT. HAVING LIVELY, LOUD ACCOMPANIMENT HELPS TREMENDOUSLY WITH THE ENERGY OF THE CONTINGENT. ALSO, STREAMERS (ONE FT. BY 3 FT.) CAN BE MADE FROM COLORFUL INEXPENSIVE MATERIAL. THESE CAN BE DANCED WITH, VISUALLY CREATING A SENSE OF UNITY IN THE CONTINGENT (ALL OF THE STREAMERS UP, DOWN, AROUND IN A CIRCLE ETC.) THE STREAMERS CAN ALSO BE USED AS A SYMBOL. FOR EXAMPLE, AT ONE DEMONSTRATION, N.Y.C. DANCERS PAINTED ON THE STREAMERS THE NAMES OF NICARGUAN ARTISTS, DANCERS, AND ACTORS WHO ARE PERFORMING FOR THE SANDINISTA TROOPS DEFENDING THE REVOLUTION ON THE BORDER.

REMEMBER:

1. BE CLEAR TO THE CORE OF DANCERS WITH YOUR EXPLANATION OF THE DANCE FORM YOU ARE USING. RESPECT FOR ITS HISTORY AND ORIGINS WILL PREVENT THE CONTINGENT FROM BECOMING A "FREAK-OUT-FREE-FOR-ALL" WHERE THE LEADERS AND DANCE FORM ARE LOST.

2. BE CONSCIOUS OF THE WEATHER. IF IT IS GOING TO BE 100 DEGREES AND A 5-MILE MARCH, MAKE SURE THE DANCERS TAKE BREAKS ALONG THE WAY.

3. COSTUMING CAN HAVE A POWERFUL UNIFYING EFFECT. ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO WEAR YARDS OF MATERIAL AND/OR SKIRTS, BELLS ON THEIR ANKLES, RIBBONS, AND OTHER DECORATIVE TOUCHS IN THEIR HAIR OR ON THEIR BODIES. SOMETIMES EVERYONE IN ONE COLOR CAN BE STRIKING!



TEXT - HALLIE WANAMAKER - DOAN KET DANCE COLLECTIVE LETTERING/ILLUSTRATION - PAULA HEWITT