

Thursday, Sept. 16, 1982

Spotlight

is Shinders, one of those "big-city" newsstands that carries just about every magazine published, along with copies of a lot of out-of-town newspapers.

In fact, there are two Shinders on Hennepin now, but the title "Shinders to Shinders" for the Scully, Poltusa, McBride collaboration.

The idea behind the Studio X series is to get artists of different stripes together on projects, and toward that end, the Minnesota Independent Choreographers' Alliance held several pre-arranged meetings. Poltusa and McBride met at one of those.

"I met McBride, who introduced himself as a 'blues talker and street walker,' and I was immediately interested in him," said Poltusa. "He was such a character." McBride, whose work has been published throughout the state, has conducted workshops for the Minnesota Writers in the Schools program, and is a founding member of two groups, Mother-Child Poetry Jazz and Mid-Continental Jazz Chorus.

Poltusa, an independent filmmaker and editor who has worked on a number of television commercials on the air, also is a still photographer. He said he had always wanted to photograph on Hennepin Avenue at night. His idea was to capture the city at night, and he was convinced quickly that McBride could help.

McBride narrates "Shinders to Shinders," described as a "surrealistic film portrait" featuring original music, poetry and choreographed vignettes "reflecting the patterns and purposes of those who congregate" on Hennepin. The poem quoted above is from his narration.

Poltusa doesn't remember the circumstances of his meeting with Scully, a very active and very modern dancer/choreographer, who describes himself as a "non-dancerly dancer who thinks of Merce Cunningham as 'traditional' dance." But Scully, like Poltusa, has a studio on Hennepin. Scully's is, in fact, on the block between Sixth and Seventh covered in "Shinders to Shinders."

"We felt that specific block had a lot to say with its colorful people, its characters, movie houses, sellers, hustlers, religious people. An interesting variety of people," said Poltusa.

So they filmed on the street, sometimes from midnight to dawn. There were hours and hours of improvisation, rehearsals, staging and impromptu filming of people on the street.

"Since we actually filmed on the street, we decided to show the film on the street, allowing the people in the film and the people we're characterizing to see it," explained Poltusa.

Thus "Shinders to Shinders," a 15-minute film, will be shown at 8:45 and 9:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday on the huge billboard towering a cigarette above Shinders Readmore Bookstore at Seventh and Hennepin.

Negotiations were delicate with the sign company owning the billboard, with the tobacco company whose product is normally advertised on it, and with the city. Everything is squared away for Friday and Saturday, but Sunday's showings (at the same times) will have to be at a building at 826 Hennepin, in the middle of the block.

How does one project a film onto a billboard high above the street? First, the billboard, which is about 42 feet wide and 25 feet deep, had to be made into a screen. The artists wanted to whitewash it, but couldn't get permission to do so. So they're putting a scrim, or cloth covering, approximately 30 by 25 feet, on it.

The projector for Friday and Saturday will be on the third

floor of a building kitty-corner from Shinders at the studio of the City Lights Ballet School, a distance of about 140 feet. On Sunday, the projector will be in a parking ramp across the street from the City Center.

For the image to be seen, some street lights have to be turned off, rendering people on the avenue more vulnerable than they ordinarily are. But city officials, although they wouldn't block off the avenue (remember all the homicide and other communitarily celebrations on Hennepin?), agreed to shut off the lights for

the duration of the film, and to put barricades into Seventh Street, widening the sidewalk so people can stand and watch the film.

Poltusa said it was interesting, but difficult at times, for him to work with Scully and McBride, both of whom primarily are improvisational artists, or extemporaneous creators.

"McBride provided the mood, Scully the movement, I the motion, and Paul Tavel, Dave Edman and others, the music," he said. □

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Theatrical spotlight to penetrate shadows of big-city street life

By Bob Prozman
Staff Writer

Hennepin Avenue — "home" to gay nightlife, prostitutes and panhandlers, the Jesus People's Church, zoules and cabarets, the Minnesota Dance Theater, artists and con artists.

The Avenue, the one street that in the eyes of many makes Minneapolis a real city (as in New York, Chicago, et al), is the most colorful, intriguing, and perhaps, for some, intimidating thoroughfare in the Twin Cities.

For poet Roy McBride it's "The Street."

"It's my beat. It's the street/ Rubbing shoulders with the blues. With the sun. It's the sewer / In the

door. Against the wall. / In the shade. It's my beat."

"Father Hennepin's shadow / pol' Scandinavian alphabet / Multi-ethnic, liberating / Hennepin."

And now Hennepin Avenue is the subject of an artistic collaboration among choreographer Patrick Scully, filmmaker Daniel Poltusa and McBride, who have created "Shinders to Shinders" for the third event in the Studio X experimental dance series sponsored by the Minnesota Independent Choreographers' Alliance.

Along with the fast-food joints, the almost unattended strip joints with their B-girls, porno shops, movie theaters, hole-in-the-wall bars, and other assorted places of pain and pleasure, Pleasers see *Spotlight* / 18B

Life on Minneapolis' Hennepin Avenue is subject of a 15-minute film, "Shinders to Shinders."

