

Cecily Morrow

Dancing Toward a Career in "Sparts"

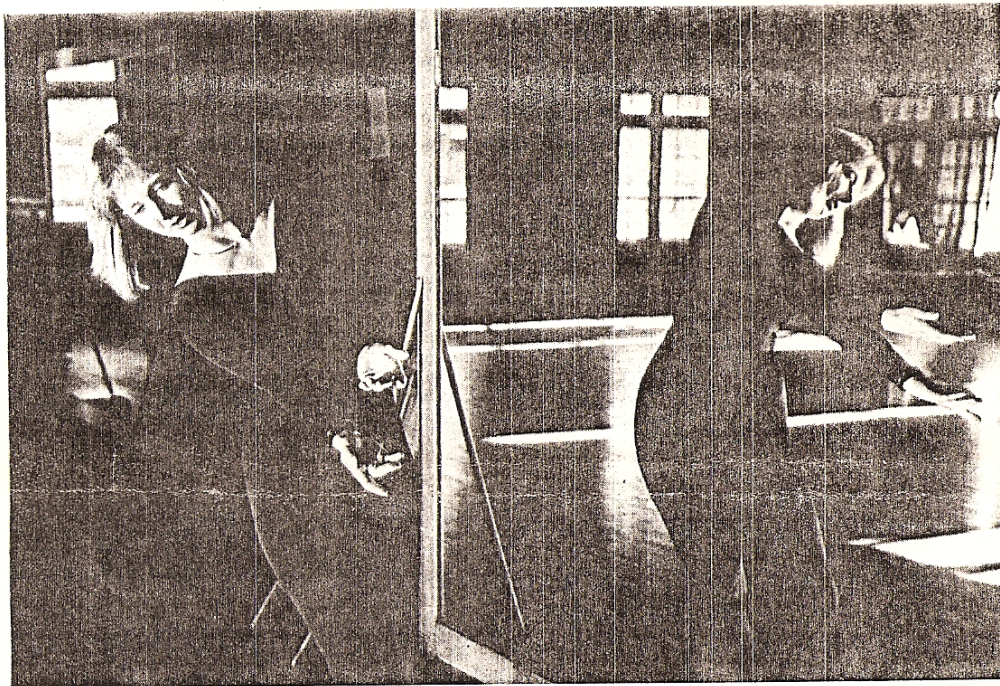
Dance is rooted in *all* the arts," says Ada Comstock Scholar Cecily Morrow, a double major in dance and English. "To dance, you need a knowledge of music, a creative artistic imagination, and a knowledge of how to manipulate your body into the forms and shapes you want to create. And of course, dance performances are theater." Miss Morrow came to Smith for the mental and physical preparation she needs to create a dream that fuses academics, the arts, and sports into what she calls "sparts."

Miss Morrow became interested in dance through her 14-year career as a professional figure skater and skating coach. She trained with Olympic coaches and received an award that indicates her skating skills are on a par with those of Olympic athletes. "I came to Smith knowing I wanted to study dance intensively," she says. "Because of my performance background in skating, I wanted to expand my knowledge of movement and work with my body more."

Miss Morrow enjoys tap and modern dance but has focused on the department's strong ballet technique classes. "Each ballet class is beautifully structured as if it were a composition," she says. She has also taken courses in the history of dance, and she appeared in last spring's dance concert. Surprisingly, she rarely appears on the ice these days. "I don't really have to skate while I'm here because dancing keeps my body in shape," she explains.

Dance is a rigorous major, says Miss Morrow. "Performance classes are almost harder than the academic classes because you have to be mentally sharp and physically rested to perform well." At first she thought establishing a dance major was a mere formality, but now she says, "A lot of dancers are very excited about it, and I think it's opened doors for many people."

Cecily Morrow came to college partly because she was asked to write a book about her skating coach, the legend-



Dance can be used to train all kinds of athletes, says professional skater and dance major Cecily Morrow. She's working on her technique in the dance studio overlooking Paradise Pond.

ary Gustave Lussi. He trained many national and Olympic champions, including Dorothy Hamill and Dick Button, and invented now-standard skating moves such as the flying camel, flying sit-spin, and double and triple jumps. Now 90, Mr. Lussi asked Miss Morrow to record his techniques. "I realized as I started to write the book that I didn't have the academic background for it," she recalls. At Smith, Miss Morrow has developed the academic and artistic skills needed to tackle this ambitious project. The book now has two interested publishers and has inspired a planned PBS documentary on Lussi.

Before coming to Smith, Miss Morrow founded Ice Theatre, a New York City repertory company she describes as similar to Ice Capades but without the glitz and glit-

ter. She still performs and works with Ice Theatre, an innovative collaboration of the visual arts, music, dancing, and skating.

Her ambitions are as impressive as her accomplishments. One goal is to become a dance critic, but Miss Morrow's greatest dream is even bolder. "I'd like to integrate the sports and arts communities by starting a school for serious young artists and athletes. Although there are schools that have academics and sports or academics and arts, none that I know of has all three," she says. A dance background is an essential part of preparing to head this school, Miss Morrow says. "I know you can use dance to train *any* kind of athlete, and I need a firm knowledge of all forms of dance technique and of the history of dance for the school I envision." □