Choreographer Sandy Aronoff

Graduate Creates Gay Dances

Dancing is music you can see, said Sandy Aronoff, choreographer for the Baylor Theater production of "Li'l Abner."

"The choreographer is in charge of making up the dances and also adding movement and gestures to songs."

"In other words I'm in charge of giving all movement to musical numbers," she said.

And in "Li'l Abner," the first musical at Baylor Theater in three years, dance movement is the most important single element, said Miss Aronoff, a graduate drama student from Philadelphia, Pa.

The production, based on the characters created by cartoonist Al Capp, will open at 8:15 p.m. Tuesday and will continue its run on April 29 and 30 and May 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7.

Miss Aronoff, who has been planning the choreography for the musical since last summer, said that the first requirement of her job is making sure the movements for each number correspond with the style of the show and the mood of each selection.

The main challenge presented by "Li'l Abner" is coordinating the movements of the individual performers in the dance scenes, she said. There are 48 students in the cast.

Miss Aronoff teaches a 1-hour credit drama course called "Introduction to Stage Movements," which the cast members are taking.

As an example of the part played by visual aspect of the performance, the 5-foot-5 choreographer with red hair cited the Sadie Hawkins Day race, generally considered the highpoint of the show.

Nobody sings or delivers any orations then—it's all action and orchestra," said Miss Aronoff.

"It's eight minutes of pandemonium," said Miss Aronoff.

She noted the attention to details and subtleties of mood demanded by her job when she said of the scene, "One of the dances in the show is supposed to show nothing but gaiety and enthusiasm, but even in a theme that's as general as this you have to remember that the characters are Dogpatchers and make sure they communicate gaiety and enthusiasm the way Dogpatchers would."

Miss Aronoff said she has been interested in choreography since she was seven years old.

She began taking the lessons in modern dance and ballet then, which led to her performance with the Philadelphia Ballet Guild and the Philadelphia Symphony.

She danced and did some choreography in high school and later became dance assistant at the University of Denver, where she was graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in drama in 1963.

At Baylor she is working toward her master's degree in drama and teaching the dance movement course and two classes in children's theater.

Miss Aronoff portrayed Helen Keller in the Baylor Theater production of "The Miracle Worker" and was assistant director of "Dandelion Wine."

She has appeared in every theater production this season except "Winnie the Pooh."

Drama teaching is her planned career.

But a more immediate goal of Sandy Aronoff is to give the "Li'l Abner" audience "a good time through enthusiastic, fresh dance movement."