| Ballet build <br> on success <br> in program | $\begin{gathered} \text { By LUCY HOOD } \\ \text { Staff Writer } \end{gathered}$ <br> The New York City Ballet, The American Ballet Theater, The Joffrey Ballet, the Houston Ballet.....The Houston Ballet? Yes, the Houston Ballet, which performed in Reynolds Coliseum at North Carolina State University this past weekend, ranks among the best ballet companies in the nation. <br> Although the Houston Ballet may not be able to compere with the ABT or the NYCB in technical virtuosity, the company's choreography emphasizes the danicers' strong points. <br> The Houston Ballet began as a strong local company in Houston, Texas, in 1955. In 1969, the company was made professional by its Board of Trustees. The company grew and became a major touring company in the Southwestern regions of the United States. In 1976, the new artistic director, Ben Stevenson, established an academy to train students for the company, and he began | to build a strong classical repertoire for the Houston Ballet. This season marks the 25 th anniversary of the Houston Ballet Foundation. This makes a nice success story, and the Houston Ballet's performance Friday night continued to build upon the success story. <br> The program opened with Bartok Concerto a percussive plece performed to music by Bela Bartok, an early 20th-century composer known for his energetic pieces with strong rhythms. <br> As the curtain opened, seven couples were spaced evenly on the stage. Each couple danced within its own circle using a combination of well- synchronized arm movements, pirouettes and synchronized arm movements, pirouetes arabesques. The dancers moved with beautiful precision in this movement and throughout the entire piece. <br> The second movement began with the dancers in a huddle on center stage holding their arms high and swaying them. One couple after another spun off, making the cluster look like a dandelion blown apart by the wind. | Andrea Vodehnal and Dennis Poole performed a more slowly paced pos de deux. The percussive movements remained but they were given a softer touch with lifts that melted into another position. The ensemble returned and the movement ended just as it began with the cluster of waving arms. <br> The third movement ended the entire piece in the same way it started. <br> This was a brilliantly performed piece as was the second, Three Preludes. Danced by Dennis Poole and another principal dancer, Janie Parker, this romantic piece consisted of three movements, this romantic piece consisted of three move each one becoming progressively shorter. <br> For the second and third parts of the dance, Parker and Poole moved through a series of leaps and beautifully executed pirouettes. Her strength and control when holding positions were excellent: <br> A small comical number was added to the program, Pie are Squared, and performed by Steven Brule, Thomas Boyd and Rosemary Miles. The dancers,dressed in a simple costume of black | leotards and tights, mocked the classical form of dance by attempting different lifts and leaps that ended in contorted positions, This short dance by the previous two pieces. <br> The program ended with Raymonda Act III. The first section, called the Czardes, was a fun character dance performed by the corps. The second section, Pas De Trois, offered only a slight character flavor to the traditional classical style. The section Pas Hongroise maintained the classical structure of a pas de deux. The dancers alternated solos to show off for each other and danced together at the end. Everyone finally gathered together at the end just as the music reached its peak of intensity. <br> Raymonda Act III was a nice classical ballet with a unique character twist. However, being the last peice on the program, it failed to maintain most of the audience awe-struck before the first and second intermissions. |
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