

The Prince is alive and well: Vilella comes to Meredith

by Ann Stringfield

Early last Friday evening as most of the Meredith population prepared for dates or simply an evening with "The Incredible Hulk," a yellow handbill was distributed door-to-door. "Where can you meet a man who..." it began, enumerating the accomplishments of the man who taught Baryshnikov the quick movements of American ballet. There was, then, an intermittent murmur which semi-swept through the dorms: "Edward Who?" and also "Is he going to dance?"

Edward Vilella, principal dancer with the New York City Ballet for fifteen years, Emmy Award winner, antique collector and "artiste" did not dance at convocation April 14 as many had hoped. Instead, he spoke to a captive audience about ballet, Balanchine and "freedom through discipline."

The reason I dance is to experience the freedom Discipline allows you to expand yourself," said Mr. Vilella.

"It (ballet) allows us the investigation of our physical possibilities ... we can show you a quality of life."

Edward Vilella is the absolute manifestation of the quality of life of which he

speaks. Just as George Balanchine's life has been dedicated to the investigation of the capabilities of the art form itself, Edward Vilella's life has been dedicated to the investigation of his own capabilities. The perfecting of technique, form and placement is what ballet is about and it is what this man is about.

To carry movement "as far as we possibly can within a given framework," and to make the difficult look easy gives Vilella an inner satisfaction.

"Freedom," he continued, "is based upon the discipline of the art form to then release you."

The discipline has indeed released him as a dancer, but it also has released him as a person. His identity as a ballet dancer and his identity as a sensitive, artistic yet realistic person cannot be mutually exclusive. This side of Vilella was especially evident in the interview conducted before convocation.

Vilella does not see himself as a celebrity.

"Celebrity status is not reality. It is unnatural ... being something you're not."

For Vilella, the perfecting of technique is an "arduous process" which is in itself humbling. Vilella seeks

honesty and to him celebrity status is not honesty.

Because honesty requires a careful examination of reality, Vilella feels we must realistically access the Olympic boycott issue.

"Before I was an athlete, before I was a dancer, I was an American, I still am This country must take a hard look at reality. The boycott is reality.

"Forget about aesthetics and dreams. It's either athletes first or Americans first We've been through a decade when it's unpopular to be an American first."

Vilella believes that this is our last option, otherwise we shall be pushed into a corner or become a third class nation. He does, however, point out that "patriotic fervor dying to do something" we saw exhibited after the American hockey team victory at Lake Placid. As for the Soviet Union, Vilella has been there and has "seen what that's all about." And it frightens him.

That is the ugly side of reality. Vilella, however, represents the beautiful side of reality - art, excellence, honesty and, above all, freedom. For him, these qualities of life make the difference between living and existing.



Edward Vilella, currently a dancer with the New York City Ballet entertained meredith students at convocation on April 14. (Photo courtesy of New York City Ballet.)

Kennedy nephew speaks

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., nephew of Senator Edward M. Kennedy, spoke to Meredith students on Tuesday, April 15 at the Alumnae House. Student response was good; the crowd overflowed out onto the lawn as students tried to listen to the young Kennedy's speech.

Kennedy attacked President Carter for having failed to keep any of his campaign promises since arriving in office. He said that Carter evidently had given up on his goals when he found that they were difficult to achieve. The young Kennedy stated that Senator Kennedy would support his beliefs regardless of public responses, pointing to the senator's decline in popularity in Boston as a result of his stand on busing.

After his speech, Kennedy moved to the lawn where he answered questions from students and faculty. He insisted on the inexpensiveness and value of Senator Ken-

ned's national health program. Although he attacked Carter for being unable to have passed his promised health program, Kennedy stated that he did not know how long it would take Senator Kennedy's program to be passed. He pointed out that it had taken many years for the American people to accept Medicare and Social Security.

When asked about Senator Kennedy's stand on busing, Robert Kennedy stated that although the Senator was personally opposed to abortion, he supported the right of the individual to make his own choice.

When asked about Chappaquiddick, Kennedy stated his faith in the senator, saying that no investigations had ever shown his uncle's story to be false.

The young Kennedy expressed a need for more votes in North Carolina and urged students to support Senator Kennedy.



In order to address the overflowing crowd at the Alumnae House, Bobby Kennedy addresses questions outside the building.

Wolpe addresses conference

On Saturday morning, April 19th in the Cate Center Auditorium, Dr. Joseph Wolpe addressed the Carolinas' Psychology Conference on the topic of "Neurotic Anxiety and Depression: Their Experimental Basis and Treatment." Dr. Wolpe, who is presently working the Department of Psychiatry at Temple University School of Medicine in Pennsylvania, presented the keynote address at 9:00 a.m.

Dr. Wolpe explained that anxiety is the individual organism's characteristic pattern of automatic responses to situations. He pointed out that anxiety differs from one individual to the next, but is constant in the same individual. Anxieties that are unnecessary can interfere with people's lives and cause other kinds of suffering in secondary ways, such as migraines, peptic

ulcers, insomnia, obsessions, compulsions, and depression. Wolpe said that neurotic anxiety can inhibit and prevent adaptive functions to situations.

Dr. Wolpe explained that systematic desensitization was a method of treating neurotic anxiety. In systematic desensitization, a person is taught to relax and asked to recall a slightly

disturbing stimulus without any anxiety being produced. The method systematically moves up until the greatest disturbing stimulus is recalled with no anxiety being produced.

Dr. Wolpe pointed out that depression is a consequence of severe and prolonged anxiety. Neurotic depression is a manifestation of neurotic anxiety.

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