

Ballet troupe mixes talent, artistic style

BY AMELIA RASMUS
STAFF WRITER

Canadians sure can turn—and what cute ruffled heinies!

The performance of Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, part of the Carolina Union Performing Arts Series, impressed an audience that nearly filled Memorial Hall Saturday evening for good reason.

It isn't often that a professional dance company appeals to all audience members and lives up to their expectations in attempting to do so.

The ballets ran the dance gamut, from traditional point pieces, to a series of lyrical and modern impressions, to whimsical character portrayal.

The performance began with "Paquita"—a ballet standard to which even the program referred as "a show-piece for technical bravura." RWB's technique certainly was worthy of the audience's interrupting applause.

It is difficult to synchronize the arm movements of 10 individual dancers, but the group's movements in the finale of "Paquita" were remarkably clean. Kaori Nakamura, the piece's featured ballerina, had a beautiful ponché arabesque and she executed a series of pirouettes, nearly impossibly stopping each series in an amazingly tight fifth position.

The drop-waisted rather flat skirts over their tutus provided the dancers with the perfect costumes for that jaun-

ty, hands-on-hips ballerina arm position that fit the music—"Spanish-flavored with Russian overtones." Olivier Weavers, "Paquita's" featured male dancer, had some of the best stage personality and was not just a ballerina accessory.

After the first intermission, the RWB displayed its versatility in "Miroirs" (mirrors), a more modern dance part of the performance. This is where the pointe shoes came off and costume designer Paul Daigle stopped the ruffles.

The piece consisted of five parts of a series of evocative dances—"Noctuelles" (night moths), "Oiseaux Tristes" (sorrowful birds), "Une Barque Sur l'Océan" (a boat on the ocean), "Alborada del Gracioso" (morning song of the jester) and "La Vallée des Cloches" (valley of the bells).

The stage was dimly lit with only single rays of white light and the dancers wore variations of mostly black, minimalist costumes.

All the darkness was at first bothersome until the audience realized that the lack of light only served to accentuate the contours of beautiful bodies when skin was strategically exposed and to draw attention to the important details of Mark Godden's choreography. Even the tiniest hand movements seemed huge.

"Alborada del Gracioso" was definitely an audience favorite. A shirtless Stephen Hyde performed a bit of humorous but no less technical chore-



Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet performs "Les Patineurs." The whimsical piece was designed to mimic skaters.

ography with props. He tangled his body in a scroll and held a quill almost throughout the piece.

The most moving and most abstract of the pieces was "La Vallée des Cloches."

Two male dancers, Weavers and Paul De Strooper, and Suzanne Rubio also used quite a bit of the echoing choreography, frantic upper body movement and creative three-person lifts to achieve convolution like the mixed sounds of bells that do not quite combine but are not quite distinguishable either.

Rubio was often suspended between or supported by Weavers and De Strooper, but no time was so touching and striking as at the end of the piece when she curled into a bed/throne of their ribbed, burgundy velvet legs.

RWB returned to their pointe shoes for a particularly Canadian ballet, "Les Patineurs" (the skaters), but did not

return to traditional choreography. Sir Frederick Ashton, choreographer, created a piece designed to mimic skaters. The dancers repeated certain moves such as crossing the stage by small glides side-to-side or sliding from one foot to another en pointe.

Some of the choreography was perhaps a bit too whimsical, as in when male dancers would drag ballerinas in arabesque across stage at seemingly random times during the piece, but at least the dancers always looked like skaters. The highlight of "Les Patineurs" was the set, designed by William Chappell. The backdrop was a snowy forest surrounding a frozen pond.

The stage floor was even covered over in white to seem like ice. But an audience member could not help being enchanted by the snow that fell onto the stage throughout the last few seconds of the performance.

ArtsCenter 'Jam' provides alternative to Sunday night

BY SHELLY JONES
STAFF WRITER

Looking for something different to do on a Sunday night instead of sitting at home watching "The X-Files"? Play a jazz instrument? Like jazz? Think you might like jazz? If your answer is yes to any of these questions, then you should check out the monthly Open Jazz Jam at the ArtsCenter in Carrboro. This month's Jam, on Sunday, proved to be surprisingly good and well worth the low \$3 admission price.

Each month a special guest joins the ArtsCenter Rhythm Section, which is comprised of bassist Tony Galiani and keyboardist Mark Lewis. Joining them on this particular Sunday was drummer Ed Butler.

Other local musicians, for whom admission is always free, signed up to play at the door. After the Rhythm Section and guest artist played a number to get things going, Galiani called up musicians from the list to join in with the rest of the band. With favorites such as "Four," "Windows" and "When," the Jam's community of musicians created truly spontaneous jazz, that was rich, full and alive.

One of the highlights took place after the intermission when several vocalists came out of the audience to showcase

their talent. Soulful renditions of classics such as "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Our Love is Here to Stay" and "Unforgettable" were presented by the vocalists. Local vocalist Ellen Wilson belted out an especially moving, crowd pleasing performance of the sad "Lover Man."

Following these vocal performances near the end of the Jam, all the musicians were invited back on stage for a grand finale giving each one an opportunity to partake in the improvisations. One especially positive element of the Jam was the diversity reflected in the event.

There were about eleven musicians on stage, playing frequently used instruments such as piano, saxophone and bass in addition to more unusual instruments including bongo drums and flute. The musicians, vocalists and audience also reflected the diversity of ages and cultures, although I was surprised there were no female musicians onstage except for the vocalists.

The next guest, the multi-instrument playing Alex Weiss, will play on March 2 at 7:30 PM. I definitely recommend checking out this next Jam. Sign up to play, or simply bring a friend, but you will enjoy the show. The cost is low, the popcorn is free and the jazz is very, very cool.

Wanna be on MTV? Get your chance this month

BY MARISA BRICKMAN
STAFF WRITER

The novelty of the winter holiday has worn off and we've long since become stressed and overworked. Vacation time is already well overdue. You went to Cancun after high school graduation, cruises are out of your budget and you're prone for motion sickness, so how about a trip to Florida? Panama City Beach on Florida's panhandle is quickly becoming the East Coast hotspot for spring breakers. What better way to partake in the quintessential Spring Break experience than to have MTV hosting your personal fiasco?

Rather than seeking counseling sessions, why not make an effort to live out your fantasy? The chance to be on MTV is well within your reach. Monday, February 16, casting agents for six of MTV's most popular shows are flying in to recruit participants from our very own school. It just so happens that MTV's Spring Break filming coincides with our own Spring Break.

To engage in the hoopla, auditions are being held in the Student Union next Monday from 1-3 p.m. and at Brothers Pizza from 8-11 p.m. Marcello Stacconi,

owner of Brothers, is enthusiastic about the event and hopes the event turns into a huge party. After the auditions, the party will continue. A New York funk band, Yolk, is also booked to add their flavor to the meleé.

In the past, Daytona Beach, FL was party central for college stricken spring breakers. MTV graced the presence of the beach for the past five summers. Two years ago, they decided it was time for a change of venue. So, they were on the road during Spring Break '95, transplanting the entourage to PCB. Panama City has a great beach setting which, is also conducive to production.

Everyone watches MTV occasionally if not religiously. Reruns of past Spring Breaks are aired throughout the year, and you can't help wonder what it would be like to actually partake in the madness. While MTV viewers often find themselves lusting over one of the housemates from "The Real World," or feeling the pain of the contestant on "Singled Out," others are trying to repress their desire to be a star on MTV.

Hoyt Christopher and Frank Gionotti, heads of casting for MTV Spring Break are touring the East Coast and making stops at eleven schools.

They are flying into the Triangle to recruit students from UNC and are also making a pit stop in Raleigh to round up some of the Wolfpack. Gionotti and Christopher are visiting schools with large student populations and within reasonable driving distance of PCB. Taping takes place March 8-18 on the oceanfront deck of La Vela, a club that prides itself on being the largest in the nation. The four shows are "Undercover," "Fame or Shame," "Body Doubles" and "The Grind."

"Undercover" is a fusion of "The Real World" and "Road Rules" that follows three friends around while they search for the ultimate party. "Fame or Shame" is a showcase of talent in a format similar to the old "Gong Show," while "Body Doubles" gives participants a chance to strut what their mama gave them and become the object of millions' desires. As for "The Grind," start shakin' that caboose because the camera is on your train!

The live performance, by an artist who remains yet unconfirmed, takes place on Sunday, March 16 outside on the deck. There is also a smaller side

stage for smaller acts.

For "Undercover," each friend fills out a separate application, a questionnaire about each other, and are then subject to video taping in an effort to capture the chemistry between the friends. As for "Fame or Shame," come prepared with an act ready to be captured by the film crew (don't expect to use the karaoke paraphernalia—that just won't cut it).

"The Grind" will also be recruiting on location in PCB. And even if you can't steal the spotlight by landing a lead on one of the shows, Christopher reassures that "There are endless possibilities, something to do and enjoy for everyone—come on, it's MTV."

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