



Kenosha News photo by Bill Siel

The Joffrey II Dancers at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside

Dance dedicated to founder

By Judith Warren

The performance of the Joffrey II Dancers at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside Communications Arts Theatre was dedicated to the memory of its founder and mentor, Robert Joffrey. Joffrey's life was described as a "celebration of dance," and that is exactly how the young dancers performed the program Friday evening.

Two of the goals of the Joffrey II Dancers include presenting professional dance to communities that cannot support larger dance companies, and promoting and nurturing future dance artists. Both of these aspirations were realized in this particular performance which please the audience with diverse choreography and introduced young dancers of exceptional calibre.

"The Gardens of Boboli," choreographed by Hark Haim to music of Albinoni was full of fanciful, inventive and exuberant choreography, and was danced with great energy. The dancers exhibited an easy mastery of complex choreography that required difficult balletic feats dissolving into angular falls into the floor.

REVIEW

Watching the changing dynamics from the ensemble's first powerful entrance to the unusual and riveting trio of three intertwining male dancers, to the gentle wavelike motions of five women in flowing pastel skirts was interesting and diverse entertainment.

Marlene Kandall literally lit up the stage with her ease, charm and superior rendition of a romantic ballerina in August Bournonville's "Flower Festival at Genzano." The grueling technical demands of her solo were executed almost perfectly. The delicacy of her upper torso and arms testified to the fact that the training and experience the young Joffrey II dancers are receiving is in fact producing exquisite young artists.

The third offering on the program, "Visitations," choreographed by Matthew J. Wright to music of Dvorak, was the weakest dance of the evening. The choreography was not visually stimulating, and the dancers were not able to make the movements flow. However, Phillip Gardenr displayed a fine stage presence and a promising

technique in his solo role.

The moment the corps appeared in their splendid red and gold costumes sparkling with sophistication for variations from "Raymonda" to music by Glazounov it was apparent that they had command of Petipa's choreography. Lissette Salgado gave a powerful performance punctuated by a concise understanding of the continuous flow of movement necessary to sustain the technical and aesthetic demands of her role. Adam Sklute proved to be a most supportive partner, but lacked the expertise to make the movement flow into dance. The ensemble was at its best in this piece, particularly the four men whose variation was strong, sure and winning if not always perfect.

Running the gamut from romantic ballet to modern dance, the young company displayed an ability to present a wide range of dance styles in a winning manner. Under the tutelage of Richard Englund and Jeremy Blanton, the Joffrey II Dancers graced Kenosha with a glimpse of professional dance that was indeed a celebration.

Judith Warren teaches dance for the Milwaukee Ballet School and for the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

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