

Daily News 9/19/86

DANCE



Dawn Caccamo, Glenn Edgerton in "Birthday Variations."

Joffrey brings out brand new talent

By HELEN PEPPARD
Daily News Dance Critic

The Joffrey Ballet unveiled an almost brand-new ballet Wednesday at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, and it looks like the Joffrey has added a major choreographic talent to its roster.

Mark Haim's "The Gardens of Boboli" is a witty, surprising, eye-pleasing and original piece of work. Set to the music of Tomaso Albinoni, the piece toys with baroque formalism, girding it with acrobatic diversions and sassy repartee. Though it was performed by the Joffrey II dancers earlier this month, this

performance marked the work's premiere by the first company. "Boboli" opens with a lovely duet, danced beguilingly by Leslie Carothers and Tyler Walters. Haim reveals his intent almost right away with a breathtaking inversion that turns into a long, graceful rollover. Inversions become something of a running motif throughout the piece, particularly notable in the third section, in which Peter Narbutas becomes a human pretzel. Parrish Maynard and Roger Plaut bend and stretch him into a series of positions that look completely outside of the range of physical possibility.

The acrobatics are neatly combined with beautiful movement

and interesting ideas. The fourth section is a fascinating juxtaposition of repeated simple movement and complex intertwining by the soloist. The visuals are complemented by Sally Ann Parsons' graceful costumes in deep purples and blues. Penelope Curry's lighting design heightened the effect nicely, and Jonathan McPhee kept things bright and tuneful in the pit.

Also on the program was Gerald Arpino's gorgeous "Birthday Variations," full of dazzling lifts and hurtling bodies. Dawn Caccamo and Glenn Edgerton danced the centerpiece variation with melting tenderness, and Jodie Gates was impressive in the suspended arabesques of the fourth variation. But the sixth variation is always the one that brings down the house, and Tina LeBlanc did it again, with toes that positively twinkled and a set of fouettees that looked effortless in their steely control.

Two audience favorites completed the program: Arpino's ethereal "Round of Angels," was given a particularly effective performance by Leslie Carothers and Ashley Wheater with a quintet of wonderful males from the company. Paul Taylor's schizophrenic "Cloven Kingdom," which the company does with becoming style and humor, closed the evening on a note of wacky virtuosity.