

Entertainment

Young talent gives a lift to Joffrey Ballet premiere

Mark Haim's 'The Gardens of Boboli' highlights dance quartet

By Cathy Curtis
The Register

Young choreographers come and go these days, their creations for the most part hardly distinguishable from one another. But Mark Haim's "The Gardens of Boboli" — which received its Joffrey Ballet premiere Wednesday night — is the work of a distinctive and unusually musical talent.

Set to excerpts from a handful of sprightly concertos by Tomaso Albinoni, Haim's 23-minute ballet for nine dancers (created last summer for a Joffrey II choreographer's workshop) is propelled by a deftly muscular energy reminiscent at times of the choreography of Eliot Feld and Paul Taylor.

The curtain rose on Leslie Carothers and Tyler Walters standing face to face, then repeatedly extending their arms to each other in a gesture of invitation ending, each time, in a different whirling movement. Carothers' feather-light jumps and acrobatic nonchalance were well served by choreography that had her landing on Walter's shoulder one moment and rolling out a set of back flips the next.

Haim's evident fondness for gymnastics marred a section for three men that proved to be little more than a series of anatomy-defying stunts. Some members of the audience applauded these gyrations as if witnessing a "10" performance

DANCE REVIEW

What's: The Joffrey Ballet in "The Gardens of Boboli," "Birthday Variations," "Round of Angels" and "Cloven Kingdom."
Where: Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Music Center, Los Angeles.
When: Wednesday night. (Joffrey season continues through Sept. 21.)
Ticket prices: \$7.50 to \$35.
Call: 634-1300.

Perhaps due to some lack of chemistry between (Leslie Carothers) and her flight crew on this particular night, she no longer seemed to possess the unearthly, air-wafted quality she once had in this role.

in the Olympics.

But when he has a group of male and female dancers to work with, the results are appropriately buoyant and bright. There are some awfully Tayloresque moments here — an arm gesture here, a torso wiggle there and interludes when one sex (arrayed with studied casualness on the floor) watches the other. What Haim works with the music. Following the lead of Taylor and Twyla Tharp, he has concocted a contemporary, vernacular movement equivalent to the 18th-century pulse of the score.



Dawn Caccamo and Glenn Edgerton dance Gerald Arpino's 'Birthday Variations.'

neer of civilized sophistication. To underline the effect, Malloy Miller's ricocheting contemporary percussion score interrupts the stately Baroque strains of music by Arcangelo Corelli.

It's been said often enough before, but the light, balletic Joffrey dancers don't quite do justice to the earthy qualities of this piece. As danced by Tay-

lor's own, more robust and (when necessary) earthbound company, the sight of men in evening finery acting like Neanderthals just about ready to discover fire and start roasting woolly mammoths is delightfully funny. At the Joffrey, it's hard to believe these nice folks have slipped that far back in the evolutionary charts.