

Joffrey II Dancers Present Superb Program

By ELIZABETH DRESZEL

Every little girl's fantasy was brought to life Tuesday night on the stage of Curfman Hall as the Joffrey II Dancers presented a superb program of mostly classical dance. Established in 1969 as an offshoot of the famous Joffrey Ballet, the Joffrey II company prides itself on preserving the essence of classical ballet as well as encouraging the development of quality modern dance. Though Tuesday's performance was definitely heavy on the classical end, the audience was treated to several of the more tame aspects of modern dance, too.

The evening opened with "The Sons of Boboli," featuring the music of Tommaso Albinoni and choreography of Mark Haim. Movement I was slow moving with dancer Tracy Sartorio exhibiting graceful classical style en pointe. She was ably accompanied by Adam Sklute. Movement II incorporated the entire nine person ensemble in a much more modern series, displaying

relaxed, almost casual movement. Especially eye catching was the surprising reclining position into which the dancers fell. Movement three featured a trio of male dancers. The flexibility of all three was mind-boggling as they manipulated their bodies in rubber band fashion.

Movement IV brought the return of classicism as the female members of the ensemble danced what closely resembled folk steps. A foot-tapping rhythm and the weaving motion of the dancers made this especially memorable. Movement V brought Sklute back on stage, solo this time, dancing a fast-moving, almost jig-like dance. The sixth and final movement was a high-spirited creation including frolicsome leaps by the entire ensemble.

Following a brief intermission, Marlene Kandall and Robert Conn returned to stage to change the pace with August Bournonville's pas de deux from "Flower Festival at Genzano." Herald as the father of Danish ballet, Bournonville's crea-

tions constitute the only substantial surviving body of works by a Romantic choreographer. Many of his works were derived from the customs of the regions through which he traveled. "Flower Festival" begin no exception. Romantic in the truest sense, the two were gaily attired in native costumes and displayed perfectly controlled, delicate footwork. Following the four traditional movements, "Flower Festival" closed charmingly with a heartwarming embrace shared by the two.

"Visitations," choreographed by Matthew Wright and featuring the music of Antonin Dvorak followed. The lighting effects were especially effective in this work of ambiguous, if not shadowy, meaning. In movement one, the lovely spritelike dancers danced gracefully about the solitary man, Shane Gregory, who sat in a pool of a brash white spotlight. In the second movement, Gregory was bathed in red light as the women entered to the more violent, dissonant music. Movement was more angular in this section as the women came closer to contact with the solitary man. Contact was finally made in the third movement as one of the sprites touched the man, first entering lightly into his lone pool of light. They moved gently in unison for several moments, but as she suddenly danced away he covered his eyes, distraught, with grasping hands. Movement IV featured the most bittersweet of Dvorak's "Four Romantic Pieces." The two dancers met, separated, and slowly danced to the middle of the floor. After a groping embrace, the young beauty again danced away, leaving the solitary man solitary once again to slyowly crumple to the floor.

The final work of the evening was "Grand pas from Raymonda," a group of dances from the third act of the full-length ballet, "Raymonda,"

created by famous French choreographer Marius Petipa. The costumes were the epitome of classic dance, made of velvet and satin. Flowered garlands in the women's hair and the regal music of Alexander Glazounov added the finishing touches to this perfectly charming ideal of classic dance. Each dance exhibited its own personality — whether coy, spirited, humorous, sensuous, or regal, and each of the ten dancers played to the fullest the work's popularity with the audience. The whole set featured Hungarian folk-dance influence and was especially appealing through its simplicity and subtle elegance.

The evening was definitely not one to be forgotten — either by the aspiring ballerinas seen twirling on the front row of the balcony, or by the children of all ages seen throughout Curfman Hall. With hope, this return of the Joffrey II Dancers will be followed with yet more repeat performances through the work of the Alleghany Highlands Arts Council.

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