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Culture comes to Cortland campus

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When it comes to the fine arts, I am no connoisseur. But this was something for all to see.

With deep emotions of anguish, romance and life, The Joffrey II Ballet Company displayed a heart rendering and elegant performance last Thursday in the Dowd Fine Arts Theatre. In a breath taking style, each dancer conveyed feeling and emotion without a spoken word.

Through Richard England, director of the Company since May '85, the Joffrey II Ballet performers put on a stupendous show to a sold out audience. In a moving sequence involving three intermissions, The Company features some of America's most talented young dancers in works ranging from classical ballet to contemporary and modern

dance.

Described by one student as being "like your first spring love", Joffrey II opened with a romantic, bubbly piece entitled 'The Gardens of Bobol'. This playful modern scene expressed flexibility, stamina and grace amongst the dancers, clad in colorful leotards. There was a lot of fast movement which included some Russian-type choreography.

Incredible strength was also illustrated as three of the male dancers displayed symmetry.

As the curtain went up after the first intermission, the scene awaiting the crowd was very European, filled with romance and a happy atmosphere. In pink and white Danish costumes, performers Cynthia Gannini and Alexander Sukonnik went solo in this courtship scene known as 'Flower Festival at Genzano', and

finished with a touching and warm embrace.

In probably the most moving piece of the evening, dancer Brent Phillips characterized true sorrow and pain in the soulful and "ethereal" scene, 'Passage', clearly showing the absolute versatility of Joffrey II.

Requiring eight choirs for a total of 400 voices, this heavenly background sound, created by Thomas Tallis, was the inspiration for 'Passage'.

The choreography was magnificent. Described by one person as "another dimension", the scene opened with a silhouette-like setting. Another student thought Phillips "was (acting out) God... pushing the other dancers in the right direction on stage."

As for the grande finale, it was a feast for the classical ballet lovers. A tremendous chandelier hung from center



JOFFREY II: the opening scene, 'The Gardens of Bobol.'



Jill Steeby/The Press

JOFFREY II ballet performs display perfect poise, beauty...



Jill Steeby/The Press

...and elegance.



The grande finale, 'Grande Pas: Raymonda.'

stage in the background, a ballroom setting, as the dancers in red, velvet costumes performed flirtatiously in this epic, 'Grande Pas: Raymonda'.

The heat from the powerful stage lights, heavy velvet costumes and stage make up never once signified that this carefully produced and choreographed show was hard work. Only the sweat breaking from their foreheads in a whirl of beads, indicated the intensity of their concentration as each dancer swirled around effortlessly.

At one point one of the female dancers slipped and fell to the floor, yet without breaking concentration, she flawlessly got back up and glided back in pace with the rest.

The floor itself may have contributed to the balance problem, which is simply

four linoleum strips that lie across the stage over the wood, worn through the years. The strips of linoleum appeared slick.

A member of the ballroom dance team, Janice Cardero, commented that she "could tell they (the performers) were having problems" during rehearsals earlier today, and that "they're doing the best they can with (the conditions). It's a privilege to have Joffrey II here. They're the best there is."

Even for the non-ballet lovers, the show proved to be a success. The athleticism and stamina appeared impressive to many and there was a nice turn out of students to see them.

"It was the first (ballet) I'd ever seen," said SUCC student Mike Brown who was accompanied by housemates and friends. "I was amazed... your heart was

totally exposed."

"The ability of the dancers was superb and the variety was really good," commented student Claudia Waite. "The older crowd really enjoyed it. It was something they could relate to."

Many of the faculty, staff and older crowd were delighted with Joffrey II.

"We don't see enough of that here in Cortland," one couple said, fascinated by the intricate movements and fast pacing.

Joffrey II is designed to reflect the repertory, style, and quality of the Joffrey Ballet Company. Since 1969, Joffrey II has performed in 300 cities in 49 states and three foreign countries.

Joffrey II is something for all to see. For those who missed out this time, they are I must next time around.