DANCE REVIEW

Godunov Is Good-Enough

Informed months ago that the Russian was coming, Lafayette dance fans had long been anticipating his arrival. Last night, ballerina Alexander Godunov made his appearance at the Municipal Auditorium and fulfilled the expectations of the waiting crowd by presenting a show of a quality which many have never before experienced.

Certainly Acadia's most significant dance event to date, "Alexander Godunov and Stars" sponsored by the Fine Arts Foundation, featured the headliner along with seven of the most talented ballet dancers in America. From the classic "Le Corsaire" to the comic "Yes, Virginia, Another Piano Ballet," the ensemble put on a stunning performance regardless of the theme.

The dancers' ability is unquestioned and the vehemence through which this was presented was well packaged, but left many with a desire for more. Perhaps this was because of the amazing ease with which the dancers performed.

Godunov, for example, hardly worked up a sweat in the opening number "Paganini," which he danced with Eleanor d'Antonino, Paul Baelke, Johan Revnall and David Nixon. The star's presentation of his interpretation of three scenes from the life of this violin virtuoso, displaying a perfect combination of strength and grace in a seemingly effortless performance. While the number itself was moving with a most dramatic conclusion. It did not seem technically demanding enough for one of the world's leading dancers.

Prior to his next appearance, a series of pas de deux filled the program, showcasing the individual skills of Godunov's co-stars. That from the "Great Galloping Gottlebacht," a contemporary highlight of the American Ballet Theatre's modern ballet at its best, due to the movements of dancers Rebecca Wright and especially her partner Rennall, a Swedish soloist with the ABT. Rennall scored another success with Yoko Ichino in "Three Easy Tangos," a seductive, subtle dance innovation. These two numbers featured a delightful display of agility as well as elegance.

Ichino's command of the stage was apparent as well as her presentation of the Tchaikovsky pas de deux with David Nixon, while he held his own in "Swan Lake," danced with Vanessa Harwood.

Prior to the second intermission, Godunov epitomized energy and excitement in "Le Corsaire," a classic audience favorite. While the dancer extended and then came across the stage throughout, it still seemed as though he was somewhat held back by the material.

As artistic director, Godunov chose his company's repertoire well including the comic number "Yes, Virginia," a refreshing finale to an evening of dance variety. In this dance Godunov and his accomplices shone across the stage, meeting the classic ballet form, which features the towering Russian leaping into the arms of a smaller Rennall, as well as "dopping" the frustrated ballerinas.

Though amusing, it was surprising to see a dancer of Godunov's stature in such a whimsical pursuit. Naturally, he carried it off without a flaw, showing remarkable versatility.

That the dancer appeared in Lafayette - but only Louisianians showing on a limited national tour - is no surprise. That the performance was as enjoyable is quite a feat.

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