Moving South gains support

By TOM BOOTS
Entertainment Editor

Moving South Dance displayed their talents well at Live Dates, their second annual formal performance on Jan. 21 at Municipal Auditorium.

The Lafayette-based modern dance company premiered four new pieces and performed "Les Jours de la Semaine," of which parts have been presented at numerous Moving South performances.

The five founding members of the company, Kathleen DeJean Burk, Lorraine Liebert, Kathy Dumesnil-Castille, Cissy Whipp and Becky Beaulieu Valls, are the core members and main choreographers of the company.

However, Artie Simon, one of the performing members of the company, choreographed the opening piece, Secrets. The solo by Whipp in this dance held the piece up. Throughout the concert, Whipp gave the best performance that I have seen her give, displaying both technique and a feeling for the dances.

Also standing out among the dancers was Valls, who appeared quite clearly on this night to be the best dancer technically and had no problem with expressing emotion through her movement.

L’Orchestre, the Acadiana-USL Symphony Orchestra directed by Allen Dennis, accompanied the dancers for the Secrets piece. They performed well and the live music was beneficial to the dance.

X-0 Cafe, choreographed by Burk, was the most fascinating piece. Burk’s choreography tends to be more experimental and breaks new ground more than the dances choreographed by the other company members.

The props in this piece were exceptional. They were visually captivating and added to the tone of the dance.

Country Nights, a dance set to a poem of the same title by Dr. Darrell Bourque of the USL English department, was choreographed by Whipp. The movement was original yet unpretentious and the interpretation of the poem into movement was successful. The costumes were appropriate and flowed well with the movement of the dancers.

The final premiere piece was A Day in the Life, a tribute to the Beatles and the 1960s choreographed by Valls. Getting used to the dancing to songs with lyrics as present as those of the Beatles was at first difficult, but once comfortable with this idea, it became evident that the essence of the Beatles and the 1960s was captured in this dance.

The costumes, music (arranged on tape by Jerritt Burk), special effects and dancing all worked and the dancers seemed to let go and enjoy the piece.

Les Jours de la Semaine was performed well and the independent pieces which were choreographed for each day fit together to form a strong collaborative piece.

The biggest weakness in the concert was the length of the pieces and the length of the concert as a whole. By the time of the intermission, which preceded Les Jours de la Semaine, I was sufficiently saturated with dancing and music and sitting in my Auditorium seat.

If each of the four premiere pieces had been a few minutes shorter, they would not have suffered any loss of message or artistic intent, and if the entire concert was quite a bit shorter, I would have left the Auditorium wanting more dance, not less.

The audience enjoyed Moving South’s second formal performance at the Auditorium. While waiting for the third annual performance, let’s hope Moving South keeps moving ahead.