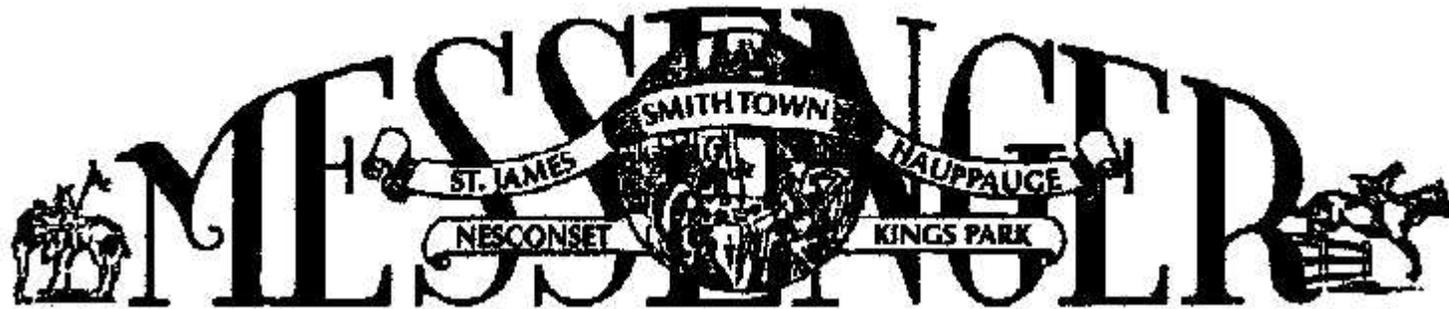


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BESFI Dancers Create a Superb Quilt

By Carol Goldberg

Some of the finest quilts in the world are created by individuals who at first work alone on single sections, imbuing them with their own talents, designs and bits of their individual personalities. It's only when all the sections are joined that the beauty of the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts. On Sunday, April 4, the dancers of the Seiskaya Ballet created a magnificent performance quilt at Stony Brook University's Staller Center to benefit the Ballet Education and Scholarship Fund, Inc. (BESFI).

The first two acts were composed of a series of variations, pas de deux and character dance ensemble pieces ("Character Dance Miniatures"), while the third act was a reprise of the much loved, light-hearted story ballet "Mask," choreographed by Mme. Valia Seiskaya to the music of Dvorak and Brahms. Let's take a moment here to note that each of the "Miniatures" was colorful in the extreme, superbly executed and a delight to behold.

The pace and the level of expertise to be seen on this afternoon was set from the moment Megan Liberty took center stage for a variation from "La Bayadere." This young dancer, with her superior extension and technical expertise, has a grace and poise some

professional dancers could envy; surely she is destined for greatness. The excellence continued unabated when the wonderfully paired Maria Fechter and guest artist Ian Poulis danced their vibrant "Flames of Paris Pas de Deux."

Their polished performance rendered this heroic ballet moment truly unforgettable. Fechter, quite simply, is an extraordinary ballerina.

An intriguing variation from "Le Corsaire" enabled a lovely and self-assured Adrienne Vogt to demonstrate her considerable talent, as did Sara Dowd when she and guest artist Luciano Lazzarotto admirably performed the poetic and exotic, "Le Corsaire Pas de Deux." Dowd is young and brimming with potential.

Suddenly, Megan Liberty is again on stage. This time, however, she is a "Vision in Gold." Demonstrating tremendous virtuosity, she abandoned her fluid and swanlike gracefulness to give this jazzy, contemporary number all the pizzazz and style it could hold.

The modern mood prevailed as we entered the second act. This time, in a unique and energetic pas de trois, Fechter, Caitlin Rezin and Ariana Janetakis dazzled.

Perhaps the most comfortable partnership of the afternoon was Christina Schifano and Ian Poulis, as they performed the magnificent "Sleeping Beauty Pas de Deux." Schifano's self-assured elegance as Aurora blended superbly with Poulis' princely overtures to create a ballet tour de force.

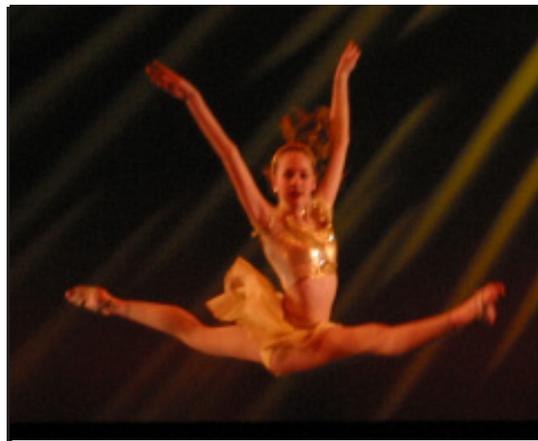
It was a pleasure to again see former Seiskaya ballerina and current guest artist Julie Miller back on the Staller stage in her moving rendition of yet another variation from "Le Corsaire." And Adrienne Vogt shone in a variation from Bournonville's "William Tell," as she more than met the challenge posed by the intricate footwork demanded in this piece.

When the Royal Family attempts to find the perfect mate for their eligible

Prince in the one-act ballet "Mask," the audience is treated to an array of personalities en pointe, as members of the royal court present their daughters in turn. Guest artist Steven Marshall, who was spectacular as the Prince, could not find an acceptable match in the Snobbish Daughter (danced with attitude by Kristen Troyano); the Voluptuous Daughter (deftly portrayed by Elizabeth Farrell); the Sleepy Daughter (Liliana Janson was indeed convincing); the Topsy Daughter (Ariana Janetakis was appropriately hilarious—talk about a flair for the dramatic!); or the Ditzzy Daughter (wonderfully presented by Christina Pandolfi).

When word went out to the villagers that the Prince would seek a mate from among them, five of the most beautiful damsels were chosen, but presented to the Prince wearing masks, so they could be judged on character alone. Neither the Shy maiden, perfectly danced by Sarah Dowd, nor the Moody maiden, as performed with panache by Cherie Romaine, made the cut. Ditto the Narcicist, expertly interpreted by Megan Liberty and the very alluring Coquette, rendered with élan by Christina Schifano. But Maria Fechter's Maiden Fair had just what it took to win the Prince's heart.

Don't you just love a happy ending? Don't you just love a beautiful quilt?



Seiskaya Ballet ballerina Megan Liberty performed "Vision in Gold" with tremendous virtuosity and pizzazz.