

National Ballet performs

By PAM SAUNDERS

The National Ballet of Canada returned to Fredericton this past week-end after an absence of two years. An event of this magnitude does not occur in the city frequently, and all three performances were sold out. A collection of short ballets was presented Friday evening, Oct. 6 and La Fille Mal Gardee, a full length ballet, was performed Saturday afternoon and evening, Oct. 7.

The matinee of La Fille Mal Gardee choreographed by Frederick Ashton demonstrated that ballet does not have to be serious and ethereal, but can be light-hearted and humorous. Set in the countryside, the ballet revolved around the efforts of Colas, a young farmer, (Tomas Schramek) to woo Lise (Mary Jago), the daughter of the prosperous widow Simone (Jacques Gorrissen). Complications arose when Alain (David Roxander), the son of a wealthy vineyard owner, also sought to win Lise's hand, with Simon's consent. After various subterfuges and confusion, true love triumphed, and the widow gave her blessing to Colas and Lise.

Given this superficial plot and stereotyped roles, the dancers did a remarkable job of creating believable characters. Jago's Lise was very young, overprotected and spoiled, flirtatious and inclined to dream. Jago brought grace, control and strong dramatic sense to the part. Colas, the impatient lover who stopped at nothing to win his love, was danced with great vitality and sensitivity by Schramek. The pas de deux of Jago and Schramek were the artistic peaks of the ballet.

While Lise and Colas existed in the poetic and slightly distant world of love, the widow Simone was very much of this world. Gorrissen created an earthy, slightly avaricious but good hearted character. The contrast between the hearty widow and her fragile daughter was overwhelming, and resulted in many humorous situations. The clog dance, which the widow was persuaded to do with very little prodding, was one of the comic highpoints of the show.

Alain had the part of the simpleton, and Roxander played the role to perfection. His vacant stare, clumsiness, timidity, and total lack of charm won the sympathy of the audience, if not of Lise.

The corps provided excellent support for the leading dancers, but often there seemed to be too many people on stage. The intricate dances assisted by ribbons, stacks of grain from the field, and sickles, did not adapt well to the small stage. There was a general overreliance on dazzling visual effects and gimmicks that distracted from the dancing. A pony drew Lise and Simone off stage at the end of Act 1, scene 1, nearly knocking down the scenery in the process. Alain "flew" out of sight at the end of scene 2. Ribbons were used incessantly, to the point of ridiculousness. One stunt that was successful was the dancing of the cockerel and four hens. Their realistic and hilarious strutting and pecking, almost a parody of serious ballet, opened both scenes of the first act.

The music, adapted from Ferdinand Herald's score of 1828, successfully set the mood for the ballet. However, the conductor

(John Goss) and the orchestra were severely handicapped in the Playhouse, being forced to play underneath the stage completely hidden from view. As a result, the music was muffled and sounded more like a recording than a live performance. It is a measure of the company's excellence that it was able to give a first class performance in such circumstances.

La Fille Mal Gardee was described as being "a happy entertainment to delight the entire family" in a publicity brochure, and it was just that. It enchanted the many children present, as well as their elders.

Fredericton audiences were aware that they were watching what is generally recognized as the best ballet company in Canada, and gave the National Ballet an accordingly warm reception.

Genya Ravan

By BARRY HENDERSON

Remember Ten Wheel Drive? Neither do I. A look in my rock encyclopedias tell me nothing. It would seem that they've never heard of Ten Wheel Drive either. In any case, Genya Ravan, one time member of that little known group has come out with an exciting debut album suitably titled "Urban Desire".

If Barry Manilow is your speed then stay away. If Olivia Newton-John is your notion of the ideal singer, don't come near because you'll hate Genya Ravan. But if it's rock 'n roll you like, Genya Ravan is for you.

Generally the album's sound is not unlike the Stones "Some Girls" album, in that it has a raw live feel to it. "Shadowboxing" sounds especially Stones inspired, and there's some terrific blues harmonica playing on "Aye Co'lorado", "The Sweetest One" and "Messin' Around" via Ms. Ravan.

If Top 40 radio was what it should be, there would be room for several cuts from "Urban Desire". "Shot In The Heart" and "Darling I Need You" have more hooks than the cost room at the Waldorf. "Do It Just For Me", a relatively slow acoustic song could replace "Boogie Oogie Oogie" and other such nonsense and I wouldn't complain. I mean really... "Boogie Oogie Oogie", that's so funny that it's not even funny, ya know?

Genya Ravan is a graduate of the school of hard knocks. Her voice is rough and totally believable. Admittedly she's no Janis Joplin. But who is, who can be? The album is unquestionably commercial, the lyrics reflect that. But compared to some of her contemporaries, they are profound. Some friends who dropped by to

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Mary Jago, who performed in La Fille Mal Gardee with the National Ballet, said after the show that she enjoyed the performance. Photo by Kavanagh

Biggest cult since Tolkien

By MIKE MACKINNON

The SWORD OF SHANNARA by Terry Brooks is a novel that has elves, dwarves, and men, gnomes, trolls and winged creatures of evil. The leader of the "good guys" is the great Druid Allanon. The "bad guys" are led by the Warlock lord, Brona who in his mortal life as a druid studied the mystic powers of black magic.

The original idea of the book is the sword. The rest is a thinly disguised spin-off of "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy. Even the sword is paralleled to the ring. Their powers are different but both serve the same purpose, which is to destroy the dark lord.

There are many similarities in both books.

The first one is Allanon's visit to Shea is equivalet to Gandalf's visit to Bilbo Baggins. Both Frodo and Shea are forced to flee their village in order to save it. (The ring was passed on to Frodo as Bilbo was too old.) Frodo inherits

the ring just as Shea inherits the power to use the sword. Shea's half brother accompanies him in much the same way that friends of Frodo accompany him. Allanon can be compared to Gandalf. Both are the instigators of the journeys, both are from mysterious background and both possess strange powers that they use for the good of mankind. There are many other similarities, too numerous to mention here.

The book is enjoyable easy reading once beyond the comparisons. The book is over 700 pages so it will keep you going for awhile. It gets slow in parts as most books do, but in general the action is fast paced.

Inside, on the fourth page, is a map which you can refer back to if you want to get a general look at what the area is like.

This book is predicted to be the "biggest cult book since Tolkien". The book overall is very good, the only problem being the similarity to Tolkien's.

Paint it Canadian

"The Image of Man in Canadian Painting: 1878-1978", an exhibition of fifty works of art with man and his condition as their subject matter, will be shown at Fredericton's Beaverbrook Art Gallery during the month of October, 1978. The exhibition carefully traces the treatment of the human figure in Canadian art over the last 100 years.

The fifty work exhibition has been assembled from public and private collections by the McIntosh Art Gallery, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, in the celebration of the University's 100th anniversary.

The exhibition cannot help but comment on the Canadian identity by examining major works by those painters who have shaped our image, understanding, and

appreciation of Canada and its people over the last 100 years.

The influence of the European academies can be witnessed in the carefully composed genre studies of life in rural Canada in such works as Robert Harris' "A Meeting of the School Trustees", and G.A. Reid's "Mortgaging the Homestead". Conversation pieces such as Fosberry's "Breakfast" a study of an informal group of figures is a domestic scene in which a family sits at the table by morning light. These are among the works that form a prelude to the establishment of Canada's first truly national art movement - The Group of Seven - represented here by works such as Varley's famed portrait of "Vera".

The variety of styles and Continued on page 20

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presents

JAN RUBES

Stan LESK

Barrie BALDARO

Bill HOSIE

JAN KUDELKA

in

Man of La Mancha

the smash hit musical play

written by DALE WASSERMAN
music by MITCH LEIGH
lyrics by JOE DARION

originally produced by
ALBERT W. SELDEN

original production staged by
ALBERT MARRE

Monday, October 16, is Student
Buck Night.
Show starts at 8:00 pm.
Tickets on sale now at the
Playhouse Box Office
\$1.00 with Student I.D. cards.