

Dance skating and Toller again

by Trish Aikens

A sheet of pure white ice teased the tense and excited audience at the Halifax Forum Friday night, and then, with a flourish of multi-coloured floodlights, the Ice Show began. Opening the programme was the entire cast (minus Cranston) which consisted of: two time Senior Canadian Dance champions and Olympic competitors, Barb Berezowski and David Porter; Olympic Pairs competitors, Candy Jones and Don Fraser, and Olympic Men's competitor, Bob Reubens (all from Canada). From the American side: Olympic dance medallists, Colleen O'Connor and Jim Milns, Olympic Pairs competitors Emily Benenson and Jack Courtenay, and Kath Malmberg, Gordie MacLellan and Elizabeth Freeman.

After an exciting routine in which all the skaters got introduced, Toller finally made his grand entry,

greeting his audience with outstretched arms. Costumed in a heavily sequenced black jumpsuit, Toller intermingled with the other skaters, executing a few different jumps and spins as an appetizer before the main course. As the introductory number came to a close, the lights blackened momentarily and then all eyes focused on a brilliant spotlight at the far end of the ice where Candy Jones and Don Fraser were just beginning their opening pairs number.

For the next two hours, the Ice Show just seemed to keep on getting better. Each costume was more theatrical than the last — purple and pinks, deep green and purple, orange and deep pink, brilliant yellows and stripes and checks, all in a very striking combination with one another. The lighting was superb. There was not just one or two white floodlights, but such a multitude of beautiful

coloured ones, that it created a spectral effect. The music was as equally superb, ranging from classical to contemporary and each skater was able to produce an accompanying mood or atmosphere which touched the inner emotions of the onlookers.

Of course the show was not without its flaws. One very disturbing thing was that there were no programmes, so that those people who did not know the skaters, or could not recognize them in the darkness, were completely unaware as to the skaters' identity. Also, there was one particularly bad "kick line" in which the skaters appeared to be no more than a bunch of amateurs practicing for a carnival. Toller fell once during the programme and although this was not too unusual, he looked very surprised, but finished his solo as if nothing of the sort had occurred.

Very likely, there were those people in the audience who were expecting a second Ice Capades. However, Cranston's Ice Show was pure skating — no frills, no gloss, and no tinsel.

Toller most likely could have performed the whole show by himself. As it was, he received two standing ovations from the audience, and at times his music was drowned out by the applause. Of course he knew that he was the main attraction and he got very carried away with himself, looking much happier than he has ever looked before. He and all the other skaters gave that show all their energy — both physical and mental — but in spite of it, they looked like they were really enjoying themselves; there was no pressure whatsoever.

The Ice Show was fantastic. In a way it was too much of a good thing. Some people thought it was definitely good enough to see twice. And as to its worth, well, one man discovered he had gotten a \$15.00 ticket for being illegally parked. He wasn't mad though. On the contrary, he thought Toller Cranston and the Ice Show was well worth it!!

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