

We decided to conduct a little arts experiment. We took two guinea pigs and subjected them both to the same stimulus - the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Guinea pig A, fondly referred to as Gina, had no previous exposure to the stimulus while Janet (guinea pig B) was trained extensively before the testing. Here are the final results (we even taught them to type).

## Ballet according to the expert

BY JANET FRENCH

On October fourth, the Gazette sent me off happily to see the Royal Winnipeg ballet at the Cohn, free of charge. Since I have studied dance for thirteen years and not been to an actual ballet since I was a wee tot, this opportunity was quite exciting.

I came to the ballet having absolutely no idea what I was about to see and I was pleasantly surprised that such a variety of styles were packed into one two-hour show made up of three sets. The first set was an excerpt from *Paquita*, which is very much classical ballet, then three pieces that ranged from a classical pas de deux to contemporary barefoot sort of stuff and finally a set of modern pieces.

I found that the first classical selection was not terribly striking. *Paquita* is a very technical ballet and I found that the choreographers focused too much on achieving technical perfection rather than actually conveying a message to the audience about

why they were dancing in the first place. Good dancing should not just be a dancer regurgitating a series of steps, but telling a story with their body and getting the audience involved.

I also got the impression that the dancers were entirely comfortable with the piece. The stage was too small for the number of people and this caused problems such as dancers dancing out of the light, occasional bad spacing and a couple "oops-I-almost-jetted-into-that-curtain" sort of incidents. For some reason, classical numbers just don't work unless everything looks perfect and although there was some excellent dancing and impressive skill in this set, it just didn't do anything for me.

The rest of the show was much more impressive. The middle set had two classical, yet playful pieces that were both very well done. They were lively and flirtatious and well-danced altogether.

The third piece was modern and I was impressed to find that the dancers were well rounded

enough to forget their classical training and incorporate moves which were very much the antithesis of classical ballet moves. In this modern number and the final contemporary set, excellent use was made of costume and lighting. These tend to be subtleties that most people do not consciously pay attention to, but they added that extra something that made the numbers complete.

Again, in these last numbers, there was a lot of very original dancing with lots of weird new age stuff, not to mention sexual innuendo. I loved it! The sign of excellent dancing is when one is watching it and actually forgets about the technicalities.

For the classical numbers all I could think about was "Gee, her arms looked weird in those foutes," but in the contemporary numbers I was thinking "Wow, those two characters have a very intense relationship."

cont. p.18: "Expert"



## Ballet according to the amateur

BY GINA STACK

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet performed last Thursday and Friday at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium.

Attempting to review the Royal Winnipeg Ballet when you have never watched a ballet before may seem a tad ambitious, but I decided that I was up for the challenge.

When the curtain rose, I was wondering what had happened to the set. The stage was completely bare except for a large white back drop that reflected pink light.

To my delight, the stage was immediately filled with ballerinas, and it took me about two minutes to realize that there was no need

for a set. The ballerinas demanded the audience's full attention.

The ballet took the form of a bunch of short dances grouped together into one long production.

The first section of the program was an excerpt from the ballet, *Paquita*. The strong technical abilities of all the ballerinas left me very impressed. I kept expecting someone to fall, but of course this never happened.

Despite my amazement with the troops technical performance, I was disappointed with their lack of emotion. I was expecting the ballet to be much more expressive.

I enjoyed the second section of the performance more.

cont. p.18: "Amateur"

# Dalhousie Arts Society

Annual General Meeting

Wed.

October 23

5:00PM

announces Elections For:

-Vice President

-Member at Large

-Member at Large

-First Year Representative

Nomination Papers Available at Lounge Room 314 SUB

For more information: 494-1313