

A standing ovation for a performance in Fredericton is not by any means a rare sight. It seems to be a tradition to give a standing ovation to any show. But it is rare to see the Playhouse sold out, as it was on September 18th, for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens as they played in Fredericton on their Atlantic tour.

Speaking from the point of view of someone who knows next to nothing about ballet technically, the program was set up very well and showed a kind of movement through the various ways ballet can be seen - as a dance form, an expression, a story, a feeling, a way of communicating a single idea or a whole plot - moving smoothly through three stages of ballet, a cross-section, if you like. The performance was in three sections, moving from the fairly traditional *Allegro Brillante*, through to the very modern *The Green Table*. All three pieces were contemporary (1932-1957), but the variety between them made for a sharp contrast between pieces.

The opening piece, *Allegro Brillante*, used traditional costumes and choreography, but with the occasional contemporary syncopation thrown in. It had a fluid quality - shifting moods, patterns and dancers easily, with no real story or structure. Diane Partington was a brilliant prima ballerina, along with her partner, Steven Bremner.

Na Floresta, or "In The Forest", was a "mood piece" showing man's close ties to nature. The background reflected the forest, without being obtrusive, and the costumes were also in dull browns and greens. The movements of the dancers were natural, and somehow reflected both the movements of humans and the movements of the jungle, both animal and forest. Andrea Bordman was strong and very magnetic on stage, and her solo was excellent.

The Green Table was probably the piece with the strongest message, and it has even been written into the copyright that this piece will only be used as the last piece in a program, so that its message will stay with the audience. It is a statement about the cause, reasoning, and ultimate effect of war. The dancers become an array of characters who affect and are affected by war, the victims, victimising, victors and the vanquished.

The eight movements are linked by a few characters and the rough outlines of a story which is left to the audience to complete, but each forms a separate ensemble by itself. Many metaphors or interpretations are possible, depending on the person watching. Death, a menacing skeletal figure lit by a pallid light, follows the story throughout, stalking through battlefields and brothels. He seems to run the war from behind the dancers, with his mechanical movements, to follow the soldiers

across the battlefield and prey on the refugees. At the end of almost every scene, he is there, and his hand falls on another character, who he leads away and out of sight.

Another character who ties the separate sections together is the bride of one of the soldiers, who is pulled further and further into misery by the war, until she dies in a brothel. There are also, of course, the "Gentlemen in Black", a bunch of old cantankerous men who gather around the Green Table to debate. They instigate the war, and when it is all over, and the last drop of blood has been shed, they return to the table and their debate.

Although this sequence was the last in the program, and left a deep impression, the other acts were powerful in their own right, so that the whole show was not drowned by it. They balanced each other, and made up an interesting whole. The evening was a well-arranged tour through various different ideas about ballet and dance, and the images remained after the curtain had fallen and the audience left.

-Kathryn Hunt
-Veronique Hejl

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens Reviewed



Les Grands Ballets Canadiens
Classical beauty and grace, contemporary emotion and energy.

ENJOY ONE OF THE HIGHEST FORMS OF ENTERTAINMENT

The Lipizzaner Stallions are horses of nobility - the ultimate expression of an art form which dates back to the 16th century. These magnificent stallions perform acrobatic maneuvers that no other breed of horse can equal.

And now, they are here for all to appreciate. Don't miss this rare chance to see them perform, including their AIRS ABOVE THE GROUND. They have, after all, been practicing for the last 400 years.

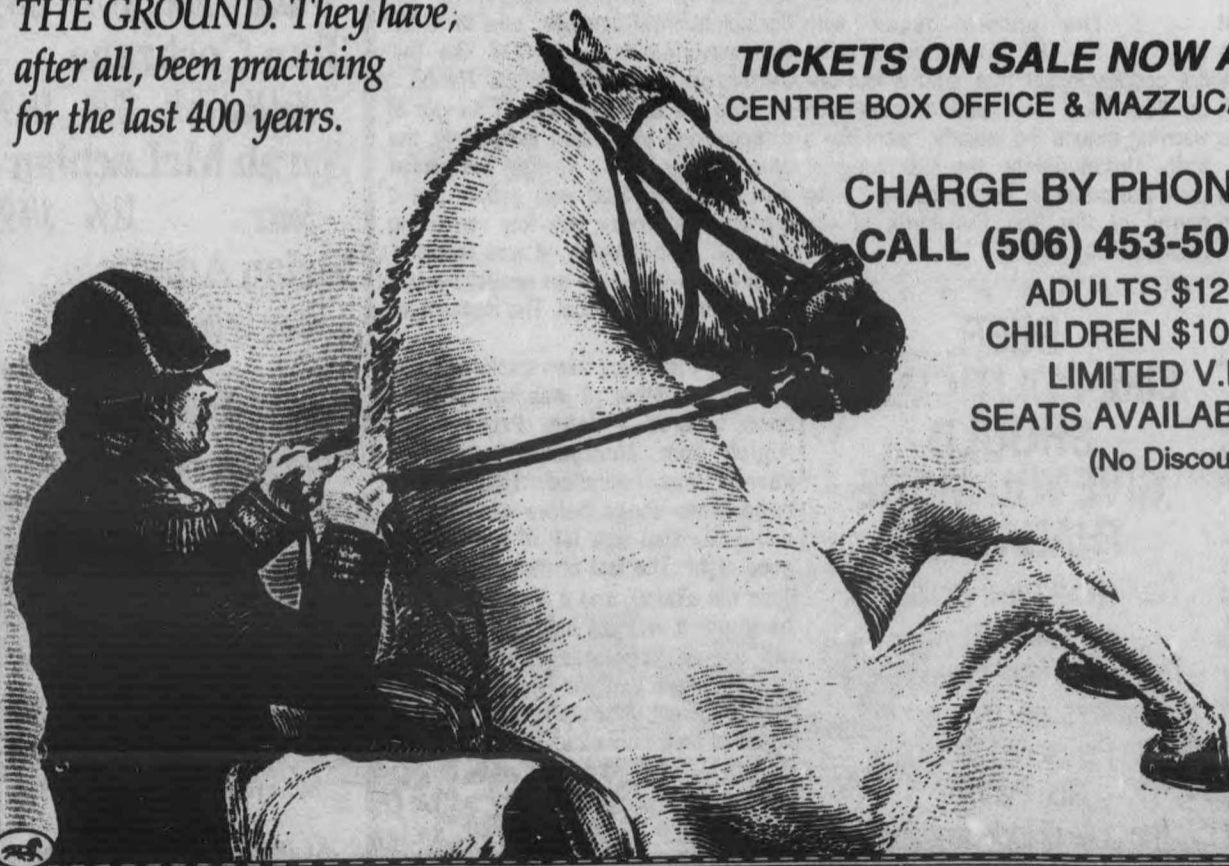
The WONDERFUL WORLD of HORSES® ROYAL LIPIZZANER STALLION SHOW THURSDAY • OCT. 3

ONE SHOW ONLY! 7:30 P.M.
**AITKEN UNIVERSITY
CENTRE
FREDERICTON**

TICKETS ON SALE NOW AT:
CENTRE BOX OFFICE & MAZZUCA'S

CHARGE BY PHONE:
CALL (506) 453-5054

ADULTS \$12.00
CHILDREN \$10.00
LIMITED V.I.P.
SEATS AVAILABLE
(No Discounts)



ART BERGMANN
Polydor/polygram

Does this ever happen to you? When I go record shopping, I find myself associating a particular style of record cover with a particular style of music (predominantly black with surrealistically morbid art = heavy metal; pretty woman/women on a pretty landscape = sappy pop tunes; and so forth). It comes from being an MTV/MuchMusic addict, I suppose. Therefore, then I happened to acquire the new Art Bergmann album, I took one look at the simplistic block lettering and the blocks of bright colors and thought "Oh, goody, techno-pop."

NOTI screamed the tape the minute I popped it into my walkman. The packaging readied one for something like the Pet Shop Boys. The lyrics sheet was a rife with poem-style wordings that looked like another "West End Girls." The titles, for most part, were like the Pet Shop Boys ("Faithlessly Yours," "If She Could Sing"). But, nooo, my ears were ripped apart by guitar licks.

Which didn't belong. A guitar, or the absence thereof, can make or break a song by defining its flavour. People remember the riff more than the chorus or the overall melody, usually - when you hear "Sweet Child O'Mine" by Guns n' Roses, to pick a song most people know, do you catch the opening electric guitar solo in your memory, or do you catch Axl Rose's singing? More often than not, one picks the former.

Besides that, you'd know whether or not the riff even fit. It doesn't do so here - these songs are practically designed for technopop! Take some very mainstream examples: Can you imagine a New Kids On The Block song covered by metallica? Madonna's "Into The Groove" by Lee Aaron? See the incongruity?

Bergmann is probably picking up on the fairly recent trend of blending music with rock. Happy Mondays had a good thing going with "Step On" this past spring, and more recently, EMF's "Unbelievable" single this summer (Which was rather abnoxious, but I digress) managed to place well. Bergmann seems to be

attempting to ride the coattails of that hit. Still he's not exactly going about it the right way.

If Bergmann could turn around and remake this album, the first thing he'd need to do is re-arrange everything to sound a little more "disco-ish." It's not that the songs are so bad that they need to be masked by overproduction. Not true. They may not be glittery jewels of songs, but they've got promise.

secondly, he'd need to tighten things up a bit. Just a bit. The songs here are quite short - short enough that the whole album fits on one side - but they seem to drag: it's the sensation you feel when you listen to an "extended remix" of your favourite song that just seems to repeat the same bits over and over. Perhaps it's the songs themselves (once again, a guitar-related guitar): the instrument on trial seems to make everything sound alike.

New arrangements - NOT remixes, mind you - and appropriate cuts and yanks of occasional songs (pull the last four songs) could turn this overlong, overdull, overfitted and overrepetitious album into a fairly funky EP. but right now, this is just a fairly bland LP that doesn't know who to appeal to.

Beverley R. White

