

Canadian ballet sadly fell short

By KIM FRIEDMAN
Collegian Arts Writer

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet performed the second of 27 performances scheduled in 28 days on Friday night in Eisenhower Auditorium. The performance contained excerpts from several different full length ballets, as well as complete, short works.

RWB is a very small company. They travel with 26 dancers, 12 orchestra members and a production staff. This was quite a change for principal dancer Henny Jurriens who danced with the Dutch National Ballet, a company of over 80 dancers. "Since I come from such a large company, it's (the small size) an attraction. Big companies are less creative."

The creativity of this small company was unmasked at Friday night's performance.

The first piece, *Ballet Premiere*, was the only work performed that was choreographed by Artistic Director Arnold Spohr. The audience had trouble accepting this celebration of dance, however, since the dancers were often out of synchronization. In order to achieve the beauty of many dancers performing together, the company needed to be together themselves. Unfortunately, this did not appear to be the case.

The dance did improve as it continued, with the male dancers leaping way above the ground and showing greater versatility than the females. One of the male dancers earned himself a round of applause for a set of jumps and leaps he executed part way through the work.

The second work, *Belong*, completely changed the pace of the show. Danced by Sarah Slipper and Andre Lewis, the work demonstrated flexibility, technique and balance.

The curtain opened to reveal the dancers huddled around each other on the floor, wearing skin-colored unitards. Full of heavy emotion, the dance mirrored its title. The dancers truly belonged to each other. As they began moving together, it appeared as though one body would be unable to move without the other. Both Lewis and Slipper displayed remarkable acrobatic talent through many lifts and spins. This work demonstrated a combination of the grace from ballet, the use of the body from modern, and the physical dexterity from gymnastics.

Four Last Songs dealt with the way three couples coped with the idea of death. The dance began without music, as Death (a dancer dressed in black) walked on stage among the couples. The dancers were dressed as country peasants, and the backdrop suggested a fall afternoon in the country.

Each couple increased its knowledge of the inevitable separation by dancing with more force and intensity. The pas-de-deux ranged from the lighthearted carefree and playful to the immediate and desperate. By the time the third couple began to dance, Death was already on stage, looming in the foreground. He suddenly began to dance as well, as the couple "danced with death." Soon, all the dancers were "walking with death," as they left the stage.

This piece was entertaining, but unsatisfying. It was an emotional work, but that strength in emotion was not often portrayed. There were several moments, especially when the second and third couples were dancing that the intensity could be felt, but in general the dance itself lacked the gut feeling that the subject matter required.

A pas-de-deux from *Swan Lake*, called *Black Swan*, was the following feature. This was a pretty dance, performed by Svea Eklov and Jurriens. This work epitomized classical ballet. The ballerina performed many pirouettes, fouete turns and arabesques while Jurriens served as a partner and as the object of her affections. Both these performers displayed energy and grace, showing the true finesse of the art form.

review

The last work was just the opposite of its predecessor. Instead of displaying the grace and beauty of the ballet, *Symphony in D* was a parody of all the stereotyped ballet cliches. This piece kept the audience laughing, and it seemed to be the first time during the program that the dancers were enjoying themselves.

The dancers appeared on stage with the females wearing pink bloomers and the males wearing blue outfits. And so it began. First, they executed their movements without pointing their toes or paying attention to the details that usually create the beauty of ballet. When trying to execute a common ballet lift, a dancer grunted while attempting to get his partner off the ground. A line of male dancers performed a Russian kickline and jumps, while the ballerinas stalked off the stage with their noses high in the air.

The work got faster as it progressed. First, the dancers got all tangled up, with arms flying all over the place. Then, the dancers began to shake their hips and bodies, disputing the expected regal bearing of all ballet dancers. It ended just as comically as each dancer moved down the line bumping into the dancer beside her. Although the piece was on the whole comical, the same jokes were used repetitively.

By far the most enjoyable piece, the dancers had the audience excited by their performance. It was a shame that it took them until the last piece to get their performance quality up because once it reached its peak, the company was both entertaining and inspiring.

After the performance, Jurriens said of the State College audience, "This audience was very expressive and very nice." He claims that dancing for a rural audience is not very different from dancing for an urban audience, as long as the auditorium is full. Svea Eklov, also a principal dancer, explains that different areas of the country or of the world generally have different preferences. "You never can tell how you're audience is going to react," she says. "You just present them a good program and then see what they like best."

'Hurricane' may storm the charts

By LAURA PACE
Collegian Arts Writer

Penn State is too far inland to feel the real brunt of a hurricane, unless that hurricane happens to be *The Eye of the Hurricane* (I.R.S.-42061), the new album from the Alarm.

The new album is the first release by the foursome from Wales since October of 1985. It was produced in London by John Porter who has worked with the Smiths, Roxy Music, Billy Bragg, Eric Clapton and Steve Winwood, and contains the same spiritually uplifting messages that are featured in their first two albums, *Declaration* and *Strength*.

Lead vocalist Mike Peters' voice has been somewhat refined and his lyrics are still optimistic, but not as anthemic.

"We're not out to make some kind of almighty statement. We're not on some kind of holy pilgrimage. We're just people growing up and learning to cope with our world. And we happen to be a rock and roll group," he said.

Peters leads the group vocals, plays acoustic and electric guitar and the harmonica. The lead guitarwork is done by Dave Sharp who also plays the acoustic guitar and sings. Sharp appeared earlier this year on Wire Train's album *Ten Women*, where he played the lead guitar on "Breakwater Days."

Eddie MacDonald plays bass guitar and bass synth as well as keyboards and backing vocals. Finally, drummer "Twist" rounds out the group with his backing vocals.

The first single from the album is called "Rain in the Summertime," and the accompanying video can be seen on MTV. On the first listen, it seems choppy, but after a few times through, it can have a stronger appeal and the tune can easily be sung.

Peters said it is a "very emotional piece of work," and Sharp said it has

a "fluid feel — same thing that makes it sound different every time I listen to it."

Still, the best two tracks on the album are "Shelter," and "Rescue Me."

"Rescue Me" is highly danceable, and should it get some commercial airplay, it could be the big breaker for the Alarm. It contains the same type of pleading lyrics found on the title track of *Strength*, but with a happier tone. It is by far the best track on the album.

was applauded for the single "The Spirit of '76," its "street-like chronicle of punk rock," according to their publicists.

Strength contained lyrics of first person instead of lyrics of collective first person, like those contained in their first album, *Declaration*. *Declaration* was criticized for its lyrics that seemed to cry "War."

The album's most successful cut was "68 Guns," that cried for people to fight for freedom. It also contained the song "Third Light," the excellent-

1986 that won them critical acclaim. The Alarm should be hitting the American stage to support their new effort.

Mike Peters wished his audience to know he is looking forward to the tour.

"Tell them we're looking forward to seeing them again. We certainly miss them. It's been a long time and we're looking forward to getting back out there," he said.

Agreed, the Alarm represents the best in New Music. But it is difficult



the Alarm

"Shelter" is easy to sing and should turn people who only just liked the Alarm into fans. It is already getting airplay by album-oriented rock radio stations. Should contemporary-hits radio stations pick up these songs, the group could land in the Top Ten.

The album contains "One Step Closer to Home," a live track that sounds much like a Billy Bragg song. Though Peters' voice is sometimes grovelly and off-key in live productions, he holds his own very well on this piece.

The record as a whole still sounds much like *Strength*, but that should be taken as a compliment. *Strength*

ly-mixed song of the death of a soldier — "First light / the Sniper saw you / second light / took careful aim / third light / pulled the trigger / of the gun / dead, dead, dead."

With the release of *Strength*, the words, like those in "Spirit of '76" sang of personal freedom — "If a man can't change the world these days / I still believe a man can change his own destiny . . . I will never give in / until the day that I die / I'll get myself some independence / carve out a future with my two bare hands."

With these uplifting words in mind, the band taped a concert on April 12,

to define New Music since a lot of it is pretty old. What separates the Alarm from the New Music category that they now embrace from the popular success that comes from a Top 40 hit? The answer may be in *The Eye of the Hurricane*.

Alarm fans should love this album, though it takes a few times around the turntable to catch all that it has to offer. As for everybody else, it might take some pushing and shoving by the record company to get the album the airplay it deserves, but once it gets going, watch out.

Eye of the Hurricane has incredible potential to take the charts by storm.

Folksingers to perform at Gatsby's

Traditional folksingers Andy Stewart and Manus Lunny will be performing at Gatsby's tonight at 8 p.m.

Stewart is a member of Silky Wizard, a band known for their interpretations of traditional Irish and Scottish folk songs. Stewart writes songs in the traditional style and is a master of the tenor banjo. His solo album, *By The Bush*, was named Folk Album of the Year by *Melody Maker*.

Accompanying Stewart on guitar and bouzouki will be Manus Lunny. Lunny has been a member of the Wild Geese, another traditional Irish folk band. He also writes songs in the traditional vein. Stewart and Lunny have recently released an album together, *Dublin Lady*.

Lunny is a member of a traditional music family in Kildare, Ireland. His brother, Seán, was a member of both the Holly Band and Moving Hearts. He credits his parents with teaching him and his brother Celtic folk songs.

The doors open at Gatsby's, 100 W. College Ave., at 7 p.m., and the show begins at 8 p.m. Tickets will be \$7 at the door, or they can be bought in advance at City Lights Records for \$6.

— by Charlene Patterson

Baryshnikov breaks tradition

By MARY CAMPBELL
AP Newsfeatures Writer

NEW YORK — Mikhail Baryshnikov, now an American citizen, starred on PBS Friday night in an unusual talk-and-dance piece, *David Gordon's Made in the USA*.

The hour-long program kicked off the new season of *Great Performances* on PBS.

The three dances were choreographed by New Yorker David Gordon. The first was *Valda and Misha*, a talk-dance duet for Baryshnikov, whose nickname is Misha, and Valda Setterfield, an English dancer who is a member of Gordon's eight-person contemporary dance troupe.

Baryshnikov defected from the Soviet Union in 1974 and now heads the American Ballet Theater.

"I like the talking-dancing ballet," Baryshnikov told reporters gathered recently at the APT studios. "It is like a tribute to dance and to this country. We both are immigrants, she in the late 1950s and me in the '70s, for much the same reason, to dance in this country."

"The rhythm we were trying to get was two friends who hadn't seen each other for a long time or two who'd just met and know this is the beginning of a very good friendship. We were sharing life experiences and memories."

The second dance, *TV Nine Lives*, had Baryshnikov dancing with four men from the Pick-Up Company with whom he'd never danced before. Dancing and tumbling with a prop chair, they combined aspects of vaudeville and cowboy movies — the music was a collection of Western songs.

"You are very much looking at a minimalist collage," Baryshnikov said. "The patterns are all the time going to something else. The chair is a center point and a counterpoint. For the TV audience, this takes a certain kind of concentration. The jumps and turns are for me a bit monotonous."

The third dance, *Murder*, a mimed comedy-melodrama, was commissioned for American Ballet Theater and has been performed by the company on stage. That same cast dances it for TV.

"Murder was supposed to be a piece in which Misha could play Alec Guinness playing many parts," said

Gordon. "The parts were invented so there would be a range of characters for him to do."

Gordon said Baryshnikov, who has acted in the movies *Turning Point*, *White Nights* and *Dancers*, became intrigued by the talking while dancing.

"He asked if there could be talking (in *Murder*)," Gordon said. "That meant everybody would have to be miked. I thought that was rather difficult. So I made a prologue with words for one person to read. The whole ballet was made before I did the prologue. When I sat down to write this prologue, I began to write a mystery story. I stole it from *The Bald Soprano*."

"The piece is funny, then it isn't funny," Gordon said. "He really does die a whole lot of times. The possibility of a range of possible emotional reactions is more interesting to me than a single one."

Baryshnikov, 39, says he is feeling the limitations of age and concentrating on new projects. "Instead of rehearsing a few hours a day on good old *Giselle* or *Swan Lake*. It's a question of priorities. I still can do them and do them well."

"I don't think I have to do *Giselle* again on stage. I did it for the film."

Dancers was filmed in Bari, Italy. The American Ballet Theater plays a ballet troupe in Italy to shoot a movie of *Giselle*. The ballet is within the movie, and so is an off-stage romance between Baryshnikov and young Julie Kent, in some ways parallel to the plot of *Giselle*.

Baryshnikov says he likes performing less than he used to. "I like being part of an idea and getting from the idea to the realization. This is the most exciting thing for me. What happens later, I am less interested in somehow."

Despite the restrictions of television on dance, the medium has attractions. Baryshnikov said.

"This is not just entertainment for entertainment's sake," he said. "It is a challenge, too. It is part of the education of TV. It introduces certain aesthetics. If you get into the rhythm, you can enjoy it the way we do. If you're not with us, I'm sorry. It was an honest attempt."

Baryshnikov said he'd like to do something on MTV. "An especially designed program based on the essence of pop art and pop music. There's a lot of interesting stuff going on."

They Might Be Giants try everything once

By CHARLES PATTERINO
Collegian Arts Writer

Three giant xeroxed cardboard faces hang as a backdrop for They Might Be Giants. Whose face is that? Hubert Humphrey? Joe McCarthy? He looks like every porkbarrel politician who ran this great nation before JFK made looking blow-dried and air-brushed a standard requirement for national office.

Like their backdrop, They Might Be Giants remind you of a lot of things, but when you try to think of exactly what, you go blank. Maybe that's because They Might Be Giants aren't like anybody else.

First, consider the lineup. TMBG is John Flansburgh on guitar and vocals, John Linnell on accordion, saxophone and vocals, and their soundman / drum machine programmer / "omnipresent guiding force" Bill Krauss. Not exactly your typical guitar / bass / drums combo.

Next, consider the music. TMBG take eclecticism to its outer limits. Country? Pop? Broadway? Polka? TV theme songs? Sometimes they do it all in one song. They have tunes

about writer's block. Toys R Us, female hotel detectives, Bill Krauss, and even love. They marry jumpy rhythm tracks and thickly layered sound collages to pure pop hooks and their own vocals that sound like John Lennon with an adenoid infection. The result is cutting-edge pop music, the sound of the 1990's.

Finally, consider their live show. At their four-weekend stand at the Village Gate in New York City, the two Johns wailed away in front of those giant heads like the hyperactive garage band progeny of Lawrence Welk and Laurie Anderson.

Backed by prerecorded tapes, Flansburgh chopped at his guitar and Linnell pumped his accordion with wild abandon. They slashed through tough versions of their future-pop hits, "Put Your Hand Inside the Puppet Head" and "Don't Let's Start." They also stopped for some good-natured, arty silliness like doing an instrumental "My Funny Valentine" on accordion and melodica. They opened the show by singing a new song with tall red velvet hats perched on their heads.

To bring their snappy tunes to the



They Might Be Giants demonstrate the tools of their trade and engage in some self-promotion.

masses, TMBG started a Dial-A-Song service three years ago. If you call their special number, you can hear the latest TMBG song. They write about six or seven new songs to the rotation every month.

"We started the service because I was robbed of all my stage equipment and Linnell broke his wrist, so he couldn't work," Flansburgh said. "We don't make any money off of it. It's a home phone."

Flansburgh looks like Jerry Lewis in *The Nutty Professor*. Wearing green pants, a white button-down shirt, and glasses with thick, black rims, he defies every rock and roll stereotype imaginable. "We're not exactly a high-fashion band. If we knew how to dress, we probably would," he said.

Linnell looks marginally more fashionable with his askew haircut, but his frequently worried expression undercuts any potential hipness. Asked about the face on the backdrops, he said, "We don't know who he is exactly either. He's Mister Mystery, Mister Psycho Fuck-Up."

TMBG formed when Flansburgh and Linnell met on their high school

newspaper staff in Massachusetts. They broke up while they went to college, but reformed in 1983 to start playing New York's East Village clubs, where they refined their show.

"I originally performed with a Farfisa organ, but I lived with a woman who loaned me her accordion, and I stuck with it. I can move around more onstage with an accordion, and it's also cool-looking," Linnell said.

TMBG released a cassette in 1985 on Express Music. Many of those songs ended up on their first, self-titled album on Bar / None Records, released at the end of 1986 to high critical acclaim. *They Might Be Giants* contains "Puppet Head" and "Don't Let's Start," plus 17 more cryptic toe-tappers, such as "Youth Culture Killed My Dog" and "Chess Piece Face."

"Chess Piece Face," a spooky synthesizer meditation on the title character's life, was inspired by a co-worker of Flansburgh's at his job at a book publishing company. "This guy I worked with had Elephant Man's disease. It really affected me, because I could barely stand to look at

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