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THE MIX

THEY SAID IT

THOMAS SOWELL: "Ideas are everywhere, but knowledge is rare."

DANCE REVIEW

A spellbinding trip under the sea

USC dancers capture audience's imaginations at Spring Gala

2003 SPRING DANCE GALA
Koger Center
★★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY MEG MOORE
THE GAMECOCK

With sparkling stage decor, fairytale costumes and a story line infused with spells and sea sprites, USC Dance Company achieved a magical theatrical combination Saturday evening, attracting everyone from parents to college students to wide-eyed little girls.

The 2003 Spring Dance Gala opened with "Visions of the Amazon," a work inspired by choreographer and faculty member Miriam Barbosa's impressions of the South African landscape.

The curtain rose to reveal a lone ballerina dangling upside down center stage. In an impressive show of strength and poise, she slithered to the floor, embodying the fluid motion of a snake's descent from the forest canopy to the ground. She was soon joined on the sparsely decorated stage by a colorful, bird-like character, who fittingly swooped through the foreground, red wings unfurled.

Tribal figures soon entered the scene — some plainly clad, others dressed in leopard skin — interacting with the two animals and each other in a climactic battle scene that transposed the instinctive rhythm of the rainforest onto the Koger Center stage.

The night's opening performance was spiked with a few moments of discord, but it proved to be a spirited aperitif, preparing the audience for the evening's main course, "Ondine: The Sea Sprite."

An original work by the USC dance

program's Artistic Director Susan Anderson, "Ondine" chronicles the adventures of an ill-fated group of treasure-hunting sailors.

The crew members and their captain are tossed overboard amid the throes of a violent storm and sink toward a seemingly inevitable death beneath the waves. Yet they are saved by Ondine and her fellow sea-sprites, who work their magic to allow the sailors to survive under the sea.

Of course, as with any good story involving spells and sea-sprites, there is a catch: The sailors will only be allowed to live for 24 hours unless impressed with true love's kiss.

The crew takes an immediate liking to Ondine and the sea sprites, yet Griselda, the resident sea witch, tries to wreck their revelry. She lures the sailors into the current-filled depths, alienating them from the sprites in hopes that the crew's time to find true love will run out.

Ondine hurriedly employs the help of her father, King Neptune, pleading with him to release the entranced crew and avenge Griselda. He kills the sea witch and concedes to the marriage of Ondine to the crew's Captain Forsythe, allowing him and his crew to live freely beneath the waves.

Although it clearly took place high and dry within the Koger Center, Saturday's production captured the magic of Ondine's undersea world with its decorative set and glitzy costuming. The wreckage of the sailors' ship, its broken mast and tattered sail rising starkly behind the onstage action, provided the background for both of the ballet's acts. Treasure chests and glittery riches were crowded along the base of the ship's hull, stretching

from one side of the stage in a collage of vibrant hues.

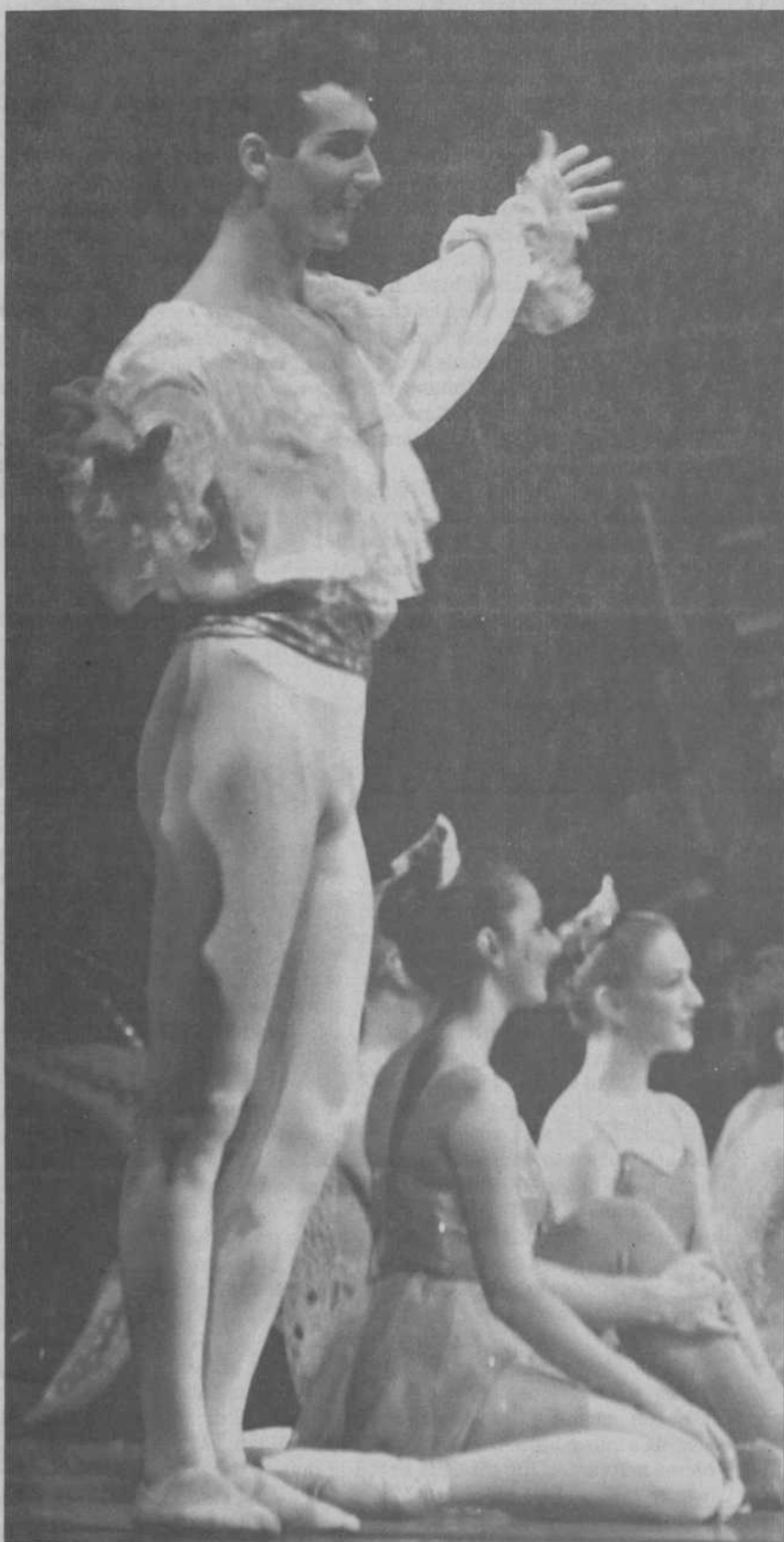
After the show's darkened, storm-ravaged beginning, the stage remained a cacophony of color for the rest of the performance. Purple sea horses, dazzlingly dressed sprites and the fluidly shrouded sea witch shimmered across the stage, the coloring of their costumes corresponding with the resplendent stage decor.

The evening's true gem, however, was the dancing. The USC Dance Company — having had to rehearse, work out logistics and perform all in one day — came out in full force. Yet the performance appeared genuinely polished and showcased the assortment of talented dancers that call the company home.

A bevy of performers had solos and took their turns in the spotlight while other cast members sat and stood attentively in the background. Both lead performers — Misha Eady as Ondine and Evgueny Tourdiev as Captain Forsythe — maintained an engaging stage presence, remaining in character despite minor mistakes.

USC Dance Company truly delivered a top-notch program Saturday evening to effectively mark the end of its season with the Spring Gala. Although there were a few union issues among the dancers, the production otherwise progressed seamlessly, with sea scene flowing into sea scene amid Ondine's underwater world. With its action-embodiment score and decorative backdrop, "Ondine: the Sea Sprite" undoubtedly captured the audience's imagination, engaging the college students in attendance and the future ballerinas alike.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com



PHOTOS BY MEG MOORE/THE GAMECOCK

Evgueny Tourdiev, as Captain Forsythe, performed in "Ondine: The Sea Sprite," at the Koger Center on Saturday night.

SHOW REVIEW

Wesley Willis 'cuts the mullet' in Columbia

WESLEY WILLIS
New Brookland Tavern
★★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY JOSH WATSON
THE GAMECOCK

Diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, obsessed with Batman and mullets, Wesley Willis visited the New Brookland Tavern for the first time last Saturday.

Willis, one of the most unique musicians of his time, mixes his distinctive voice with the prepackaged riffs on his Technics KN2000 keyboard.

Early in the evening, Willis strolled into the Tavern, his black cowboy hat mounted firmly on his head. Immediately after sitting down at his merchandise table, he began asking passersby to purchase his CDs and paintings.

Willis stared intensely at everything surrounding him.

He began offering his opinions on many things, including the war with Iraq. Willis said, "War is crazy. People are getting killed." While continuing to pitch

his merchandise, he announced that his show would begin at midnight.

Kathryn Michaelis, a first-year English student, acquiesced to Willis' forehead — he demanded from her one of his mighty head butts. Afterward, he requested that she chant the word "ra," which reappeared later in the

evening during an improvisational part of a song.

Following Angry Atom and Columbia band Tykes with Guns, Willis arrived on stage, as promised, around midnight. The set started with "Osama bin Laden," a song characteristic of Willis' style.

During each chorus, he

screamed the terrorist's name in what might be considered a kind of angry tone. As the concert continued, Willis played several of his standards — most importantly, "I Whipped Batman's Ass," which chronicles an assault by the caped crusader that ends in a battle between Willis and the dark knight himself.

The mantra Willis uses at the end of every song, "Rock over London, Rock on Chicago," was altered last night to "Rock on Columbia, South Carolina," which sent the audience into a frenzy.

Midway through his extensive tour, Columbia genuflected in front of Wesley Willis, a 6-foot-5, 360-pound schizophrenic artist.

As the evening drew to a close, Willis' set ambled through a strange collection of tributes, including "Steve Willis," a song about his drug-addicted brother, and "Michael Jackson."

But he made the audience wait for the favorite, "Cut the Mullet," and when the song finally began, everything seemed, for a moment,

♦ WILLIS, SEE PAGE 6



PHOTO BY SILVIE MARTINEZ/THE GAMECOCK

The New Brookland Tavern was the place to rock when Wesley Willis performed there Saturday night.

CD REVIEW

Hot Action Cop is beyond horrible



"HOT ACTION COP"
Hot Action Cop
★ out of ★★★★★

BY QUINN STEINBRECHER
THE GAMECOCK

It seems that Atlantic Records has been doing some market research on college students. And, after delving into the college psyche for a while, it seems as if it thinks it's produced a product that appeals to the majority of its target market. This product it has unleashed upon us is the new self-titled Hot Action Cop album.

Hot Action Cop plays Red Hot Chili Peppers-style alternative funk in an inept, soulless and imbecilic way. How this band got a record deal with Atlantic is more than just a mystery; it is a complete abomination.

These four individuals have the ability to single-handedly kill any confidence or hope left in the major-label music industry.

This is by far the worst album of the year. All potential contenders for the title need not apply; no other band can sink to the depths these four men have reached. Hot Action Cop is one

of the few bands that can actually kill brain cells without using high volume levels.

Idiocy abounds on the album with lyrics such as "Black on white, white on black/ Used to love a black chick, she love me back" from "Goin' Down On It." It gets even worse with lines such as "You're so hot, wanna do it a lot/ Man this girl's gotta go, she's a head fulla crazy," on "Don't Want Her to Stay," which is rapped over what begins as a Jackson 5 rip-off and moves to a Spacehog-like chorus.

Sound intriguing? It's not. The lyrics on the album wander from barely decipherable vulgarity to unintelligible noises as on "Doom Boom" when lead singer Rob Werthner tells the listener "Everybody talkin', but they ain't makin' no sense/ they say" The last part of this is missing because there is no possible way to understand what, if anything, is being said. And there is no human being who should ever have to listen to this album long enough to make that call.

Atlantic Records must be held responsible for something like this. Instead of putting out music that is innovative and has a message, it has opted to sell the public the mind-numbing sounds of Hot Action Cop. Thanks, guys.

If there is anything else that needs to be said in order for the public to not buy this album, pretend that it has already been said.

No one should own this album.

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BOOK REVIEW

Novel pairs message with vivid characters

"SOUTHLAND"
Nina Revoyr
★★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY BRIAN RAY
THE GAMECOCK

"Southland" is the kind of thick and intriguing novel you start reading on a rainy afternoon and stay up all night to finish. This story of race, love and struggling graduate students proved itself resilient and fascinating even at sunrise when my brain was running on fumes and Folgers.

Despite "Southland's" epic length, I could only put it down when I had to pour myself more

coffee.

Nina Revoyr's epic sprawls across 60 years and 400 pages of complicated prose — shifting from the Japanese internment camps of World War II to the Watts riots of 1965 to Southern California just after the earthquake of 1994.

The story concerns Jackie Ishida and her quest for justice. She stumbles upon an almost-forgotten murder case that unfolded in her late grandfather's grocery store. Ishida works with one of the victim's relatives and attempts to contact her grandfather's friends, who have been scattered across the globe since the '60s.

The compelling story involves three generations and a melting pot of races. Entire chapters are spent delving into the sociopolitical atmosphere of the Clenshaw district, one of the first in America to be integrated. Here, we see an emphasis on not only white-black relations, but also white-black and Japanese-American relations.

The best chapter covers the military career of Frank Sakai, Ishida's grandfather.

After the government has taken his home and murdered one of his relatives, he joins the army to kill Germans and prove his patri-

♦ "SOUTHLAND", SEE PAGE 6

