

HAPPY AND ENGAGING CONFIRMATION THAT DANCE IS FOR EVERYONE

[The Kids Show](#)

A VARIETY SHOWCASE

at TAPAC Theatre, Western Springs, Auckland

From 6 Oct 2009 to 7 Oct 2009

Reviewed by Julia Barry, 7 Oct 2009

What better way to spend a wet and chilly afternoon in the middle of the school holidays than to gather up the kids and have them entertained by the bright faces and lively dancing of the performers in **The Kids' Show!** Warm and snug in the TAPAC theatre, the audience is treated to an exciting mix of highly entertaining dances and short films, including hip hop, ballet, jazz, contemporary dance and 'Bollywood' genres.

Contributors to this boredom-busting programme include the energetic young lads (and one young lass) from BoyzDance2, who show in their dynamic and enthusiastic performance of **'Move If Ya Wanna'** that interest in dance is alive and well among New Zealand's male youth.

The Hip Hop choreography by Richie Cesan is indeed very 'cool' (as described by one youngster in the programme note), with clearly defined, rhythmic gestures and isolations and good contrasts between sustained and suddenly sharp moves. The dancers in their bright yellow and red themed T-shirts perform with amazing commitment and accuracy for their young age - a result of their obvious enjoyment of the cleverly age-appropriate choreography and, no doubt, many rehearsals! The music is a compilation of pumping beats from Beastie Boys, R Kelly and Lil Wayne.

Contemporary dance is well represented by both stage performance and film. Cheerful young students from Dance Unlimited (East Auckland Performing Arts School) perform **'Sun, Sand, Sea'**, choreographed by Elizabeth Harvey, with a most appealing sense of the joy of dance. Fluid use of the spine and natural ease of movement are enhanced by the simple and effective tunics in pastel shades.

The strong vocals and defined drum beat of the music, 'Te Namo' from Te Vaka, give way to the joyful singing of children - reflected perfectly in the happy interaction and communication between the dancers.

'Jai Ho' is a dazzling Bollywood dance, set to the pulsating beat of the music of the same name by A. R Rahman, from *Slum Dog Millionaire*. Choreographed by Monisha Kumar for students of the

Monisha School of Dance, this piece incorporates strongly accented hip movements juxtaposed with intricate and delicate arm movements.

The dancers are most attractively costumed in full white pants, accented with red bodices, silver sashes and glittering hair adornments. With shining faces and an obvious passion for their art form, these dancers have a uniquely charismatic quality.

The two films in the programme offer interesting, apparently simple stories for the children in the audience, as well as offering perhaps deeper angles to consider for accompanying adults.

'The Picnic', performed by mixed-ability company Touch Compass Dance Trust and directed by Alyx Duncan, opens gently with a small girl sitting thoughtfully in an alcove in a sea wall. We are gradually introduced to the many and varied other characters present, all dressed in exquisite Edwardian period costumes, credited to Elizabeth Whiting.

Filmed at North Head and Devonport, the film traces the social interactions between the characters and the little girl's dream of eccentric fairground characters. The seamless blending of movements by and between company members is both beautiful and uplifting and reinforces the undeniable truth that dance is, and always has been, a natural means of expression for all.

'Fly', choreographed by Shona McCullagh, to music by David Long, is appealing to the younger members of the audience in the simplistic terms of a young man yearning to fly like a bird, whilst the deeper theme of a father's struggle to set his deaf son 'free' may strike a chord with adult viewers.

There is a raw visual and emotional power in this acclaimed work, with the young man, strongly performed by Richie Cesan, bursting to set out on his own, whilst his father, sensitively portrayed by John Callen, is torn between concern, love and having to face the inevitable outcome for a parent. A stunning work in every respect.

Well done Tempo for providing young people with the opportunity to view these high calibre dance films.

Mt Eden Ballet Academy offers four varied and highly polished dances in **The Kids Show** programme:

'Honey, Honey' is a frilly and frothy jazz piece, stylishly choreographed by Trilby Palmer to music from Mamma Mia and by Queen. Gaily clad in hot pink spotted outfits, the cute young girls show an easy jazz movement style, oozing confidence and animation. Snappy kicks, flicks and hip isolations are highlights within clearly defined spatial and movement designs. High energy and exuberance stream out of these charming performers - tremendous fun for the dancers and audience alike.

'The Good Ship Lollipop' is a rollicking adventure set to the well-known song by Shirley Temple, moving into the jolly strains of Gilbert and Sullivan. Choreographed by Heather Palmer, this is a sweet and lively romp, including many references to the traditional steps of the 'Sailor's Hornpipe', given a delicate balletic twist. The dancers' neat footwork and light jumps are highlighted alongside their appealing sense of performance in telling the story of one young sailor (a young lady in a crisp

white sailor suit) and his many admirers (a bevy of young ladies in pretty bright red polka-dot dresses).

'Butterflies' Ball is every young girl's dream of what classical ballet is all about - delicate butterflies floating effortlessly in gorgeous layers of tulle, with dainty wings and - of course - dancing en pointe! Set to the soundtrack from 'Midsummer Night's Dream', the story unfolds through the elegant choreography of Heather Palmer and the technically accomplished and graceful performance of the dancers. With three bright green 'caterpillars' jazzing it up with their brass musical instruments and the sweet 'baby butterflies' fluttering in and out, this is a delightful ballet vignette.

'Carnival in Venice' has its group dancers beautifully costumed in rich red tutus with floral panniers, carrying striking period masks on rods, with the leading characters of 'Caterina' and her beau clearly defined. There is an interesting vocal overlay to the music of Vivaldi's Ring of Mystery and 'Spring' from 'The Four Seasons', to enhance the portrayal of the storyline. The flowing and attractive choreography, by Melinda Palmer, provides a vehicle for both the expressive qualities and secure classical technique of these talented young dancers.

This is a very happy and engaging performance, showcasing the talent of the future and re-confirming that dance is indeed for everyone!

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