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Art makes the world go around...and we go around the world to review it!

June 23, 2008

Drama and Dance

Without a doubt, the Jane Franklin is the finest modern dance company in the area. Ms. Franklin has developed some wonderful signature movements...dancers breaking out of ovalated arms, dancers doing circle leaps over hunched-over dancers...but the venue of the rehearsal room of Woolly Mammoth Theatre was inappropriate to appreciate the wide space necessary for the dancers. There was a lack of focus with the fuller company's dances except for a few solo sections especially the brilliant solo by Florian Rouiller in "Branch" with the background music of Shostakovich. The audience favorite was the comedy routine by Sandra Atkinson and Michael Nadolski as they conflicted a romance to the tune of "Some Enchanted Evening". Brienne Barrow Little and Nellie Rainwater moved in with "Down Town" with comic movements of getting ready for the big date...downtown, of course. It was announced that Ms. Rainwater will be leaving the company for academia in New York...a loss of a beautiful dancer in this company. There was a film "Breaking Ground" which was shot exteriorly at a roller rink hollow with some amazing dance balancing to be seen. There was no problem of focus with this film. Other dancers in the program were Stacey Tytler, Alexandra Hay, Colleen Bergeron, Rebecca Carle, Lisa Christensen Gee, Kristin Ibanez and Peg Schaefer. The final dance was "Sound Walk" with some of the older dancers which saw many errors as the older dancers looked for movement cues from the younger dancers to keep up the dance patterning. Unfortunately there was only one showing of this program but all seats were taken. (Reviewed by Bob Anthony)

The Studio Theatre is presenting The Civilians' "This Beautiful City" (To 7/6) which is a drama with music but only has one singer, Stephen Plunkett, who soared above the rest vocally. The other five performers did better at recitative. It is best described as a "Cowboy Gospel" meets "Rent" as it rails against the moral turpitude of Ted Haggard while it gives accolades for gay coming out. The negatives must be out since the audience was barely half filled for this Saturday matinee performance. The audience seemed very pleased and rightly so for there were some fine exuberant sections to get the religious spirit riding high. Perhaps this show is best for those who have never experienced such a didactic at a megachurch ceremony with three huge screens upon which are projected audience emotional reactions from six cameramen moving through the crowd and a jazz band and a megalomaniac minister screaming "love" and "reborn" from an elevated pulpit. The insincerity and commercialism reeks throughout. For those having experienced such an attendance the script was tedious and very biased. Others in the cast are Emily Ackerman, Marsha Stephanie Blake, Aysan Celik, Matthew Dellapina and Brad Heberlee. Debra Booth presented a wonderfully scenic backstage drop of Colorado Springs with additional side projections. (Reviewed by Bob Anthony)