

The Kansas City Star
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Romeo and Juliet
REVIEW

DANCE REVIEW

Ballet De L'Opera De Bordeaux 's "Romeo and Juliet"

- Presented by: William Jewell College Fine Arts Program
- When: Friday, Feb. 4
- Where: Music Hall
- Audience: 2,100 (approx)

Romeo and Juliet' *smooth and focused*

By ARIELLE THOMAS NEWMAN
Contributing Reviewer

When last-minute cast changes are announced before a dance concert begins, it's usually not good news for the audience. Not so Friday night when Emmanuelle Grizot took over the part of Juliet in the Ballet de l'Opera de Bordeaux's production of "Romeo and Juliet" at the Music Hall.

Grizot embodied just about everything you'd want a Juliet to be: young, delicate, fluid and strong. Her dancing came from the foundation of her character, rather than simply modeling superb technique.

She played opposite Charles Jude, dance director of the company, who danced the role of Romeo in this full-length three-act ballet.

A former principal dancer of the Paris National Opera Ballet, Jude made a handsome match for Grizot. Like a pair of ice dancers, their pas de deux at the end of the first act was smooth, focused and engaging. Jude was unable to meet Grizot's depth of acting however.

The production was choreographically uneven. Tilt Harm liberally capitalized on the strength of the male dancers, designing dynamic jumping sequences and realistic fencing battles. The double-sword stage-fighting between Mercutio (Eric Frederic) and Tybalt (Jean-Jacques Herment) was aggressive while achieving poetic overtones. Quite satisfying fare.

Harm, (of which no biography was included in the program - a glaring omission), was unsuccessful in making large group scenes work. Part of the problem may have been in the execution of unison steps which were not synchronized by the ensembles.

The death scene ended with the two lovers elevated above the mourning family members, embracing one another as if in an eternal portrait.

One of the most enjoyable facets of the evening was the music, which was played by an orchestra of 45-plus players (which included members of the Kansas City Symphony). Sergei Prokofiev's music was passionately interpreted by Philippe Beran, associate conductor of the Opera de Bordeaux.

Kudos to Richard Harriman, director of the William Jewell Fine Arts Program, for presenting dance with live musical accompaniment.