

# Ballet fans transported by ‘Visions d’ Amour’

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**Ballet Fantastique editorial note: Typographical and factual errors were corrected and bracketed.**

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Entertainment: Arts: Story

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Ah, to be in Paris in the spring, or in the fall ... or at the Hult Center?

Ballet Fantastique[’s] “Visions d’ Amour, Ten Ballets in Paris,” did just that this past weekend. With the help of Edith Piaf, Carla Bruni (first lady of France), Massenet, Dvorak, Faure and Bizet, not to mention the local talent of Jeremy Schropp, the audience was transported to the country known for romance.

Ellen Jorde Urrutia, who comes from Guadalajara, Mexico, provided stunning costumes [with Ballet Fantastique Artistic Director Donna Marisa Bontrager]. Watch for the gallery show of her works in December.

The opening number was very weak. Even Piaf could not save it. Hannah Bontrager and Goh Shibata were not dancing together as needs to happen in a duet. Goh was tentative and distracted. Perhaps they needed more rehearsal. Difficult to see such good dancers not hit their mark.

The second number was almost too short. Well danced by Ashley [Bontrager], Leanne Mizzoni and [Hannah Bontrager], “Je Suis une Enfant” had a very vaudeville, turn-of-the-century feel. Great set and costumes for “[Je Suis une Enfant].” Bruni’s music plus the sassy dancing of Ashley [and Hannah] Bontrager and Mizzoni made the piece sparkle.

“Je Chante,” to music by Charles Trenet, was a nice balance of cabaret and ballet styles. Naomi Todd and Tom Newman were both innocent and cheeky.

“Ma [Jeunesse]” with more music by Bruni was dynamic and classic. Camille Morgenstern and Regina [Urrutia]-Jorde’s use of the umbrellas echoed Mizzoni’s tutu and was very pleasing. Mizzoni is a welcome addition to the company. She is a lovely and robust dancer.

“Ta Tienne” with yet more music by Bruni brought Act I to a close. Alonzo Moore and Hannah Bontrager’s duet was smooth and romantic.

Act II began with two solos by guest pianist John Jantzi. Both Thebaudet and Chopin would have been pleased with Jantzi’s renditions. Jantzi also accompanied Mizzoni’s solo, “Le Papillon.”

The unusual use of floor work and an ever-moving fan provided unique ballet choreography, well executed by Mizzoni. Dina Fadayeva of Washington, D.C., created this dance.

“Pourquoi me [Reveiller]” is based on Goethe, who wrote of Werther, the doomed romantic poet. To Massenet’s opera music, Moore and Unsicker danced out the tragedy of their fated love in enchanting costumes.

Dvorak's opera "Rusalka" contains one of the most haunting arias – "Song to the Moon." Hannah [Bontrager], Adrianna Mirkovitch and Marina Ross completely captured the nymph's deathless wandering in search of her mortal prince.

Bravo to Mizzoni's solo, "Après un [Reve]" with Faure's slow and strong music. Kudos to Mizzoni's superb balance.

Bizet, Ashley Bontrager and guest artist Shibata joined forces beautifully for "Je Crois Entendre Encore." The Asian-style costumes were perfect for this tale from ancient Ceylon. Shibata was brilliant and the partnering with Ashley Bontrager was perfect.

Act III was given over to "Love at the Cafe Terrace." With delightful, original music by Jeremy Schropp, a slightly cubist backdrop by Rob Adams, 25 musicians on stage, conductor Dave Vickerman and the six company dancers, this comic ballet proved to be a show-stopper.

Both the music and the dance mingled with klezmer, jazz, burlesque and postmodern bits to form a vibrant ending to our evening in Paris.

However, the addition of "Whatever Lola Wants" after the original music was a tad jarring to our aesthetic senses.

Singer Ali Losik sang well, and the dancers danced well, but there seemed no point to it.

*Gwen Curran of Eugene reviews dance for The Register-Guard.*