

CITY & REGION

Russian dancers warm Memorial Auditorium

Moscow Festival Ballet plays Burlington Civic Music.

By **BOB SAAR**
for *The Hawk Eye*

A surprisingly large audience attended Burlington Civic Music's presentation of "Cinderella" by the Moscow Festival Ballet last night at Burlington Memorial Auditorium. Estimated at 1,300, the crowd abandoned the NCAA football championship and braved winter temperatures colder than recorded in Moscow yesterday.

Review

The tale of Cinderella is universal; it's been done by everyone from Baryshnikov to Disney. We all know the story, and it's easy to follow — and to spot the evil stepmother. She was the guy in the scary clown makeup.

It is the ultimate little-girl-princess story, and 5-year-old Landry Jones of Burlington, who wants to grow up to be a ballet dancer, said, "I spend a lot of time on my toes at dance recital" as she watched the dancers.

For those who aren't into dance, think of ballet this way: a troupe of athletic mimes dances to classical music.

"Ballet originated in France as a courtly dance," BCM president Barbara McRoberts said. "That's why ballet terms are all French."

She should know: she's the former executive director of Ballet Des Moines.

Ballet transcends language barriers because there is no speech or singing.

One delicate nuance of a live "Cinderella" not found in



Jeff Brown/The Hawk Eye

Cinderella, portrayed by Mariya Klyueva, right, dances with the Prince, portrayed by Dmitry Sitkevich, during the Moscow Festival Ballet Monday at Memorial Auditorium in Burlington.



Jeff Brown/The Hawk Eye

Cinderella is lifted during the Moscow Festival Ballet Monday at Burlington Memorial Auditorium.

broadcast or recorded form is the subtle sound of feet tapping and sliding softly upon the sage, providing strange counterpoint to Prokofiev's score.

The sets and costumes by Elisaveta Dvorkina were superb, featuring a dark, foreboding fairytale-like backdrop, heavy brocade curtains, a fog machine

and plenty of eye-catching dresses. Cinderella's ballroom gown was a shimmering pink fantasy with rhinestone breastplate, and dancer Mariya Klyueva floated like a wraith throughout the show.

Dmitry Sitkevich as the prince and Alexander Daev as the Dancemaster were in perfect form, wowing the crowd with splendid brisés, fouettés and grand jetés. Sitkevich's sculpted musculature clad in white tights was like seeing Michaelangelo's "David" in motion.

But little Landry Jones knows why Cinderella was the best dancer in the show.

"She's the most beautiful," she said, eyes aglow.

Next up for BCM: Celtic Nights — "Spirit of Freedom" Feb. 13.