

'Don Quixote' leaves good impression on River Campus audience

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By James Samons ~ Southeast Missourian

A classic ballet left some in the audience breathless as it was put on by a world-renowned ballet company Friday night.

The Moscow Festival Ballet performed "Don Quixote" for almost 400 people at the Bedell Performance Hall on Southeast Missouri State University's River Campus. River Campus box office manager Ellen Farrow said "Don Quixote" held its own against a good number of weekend events.

"With everything that's going on, people are much more discriminating about what they spend money on," Farrow said. "It seems to me like the ballet certainly got its share of the market this week."

First time River Campus visitors Esther and George Shaw said they were impressed with the facility, and just couldn't turn away from the beauty of the show.

"It just took my breath away from the beginning," Esther Shaw said. "The colors just popped out because of the dancers' movement."

"I've never seen a ballet before, and I enjoyed this one," George Shaw. "You might find me back here for the next one. This is a dynamite venue they've got set up here."

The ballet opens with an old Don Quixote in his room lamenting his age when he has a vision of the woman of his dreams, Dulcinea. Determined to find her, he embarks on an adventure with his servant Sancho Panza. His quest leads him to Barcelona, Spain, where he meets a popular Kitri in the middle of a dispute with her father Lorenzo over whom to marry. Kitri wants to marry Basilio, the local barber, but her father wants her to marry a wealthier nobleman. The Don then declares her to be his and adds his name to the list of suitors.

During a romantic stroll, Basilio and Kitri end up in a gypsy camp. The gypsies cannot resist a good love story and honor the couple with some lively dancing. They are joined by some more visitors, as Lorenzo, Sancho and the Don have followed the couple.

Back in Barcelona, the marriage issue still has not been resolved. Basilio fakes a mortal wound to get Lorenzo to consent to a union with Kitri. Lorenzo falls for the act, and agrees to the marriage. The ballet ends with a festive wedding scene, in which everyone gets a happy ending. Don Quixote, realizing that Kitri is not his dream girl, sets off on another adventure.

"I've read the book and wasn't really expecting this to be anything like it. You know, like how it is when you see a movie based on a book," Erin Bohannon said. "I found the storyline to be right along with the book, though. And the dancing and grace just made everything come alive for me. I will be first in line for tickets if the Moscow Ballet comes back."

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