

# Community Celebrates 'Swan Lake' Performance

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The night ended with a roaring standing ovation. Thursday night at 7 p.m. the doors to Lee Hall Auditorium opened for the last performance of the Lyceum Series season.

The Moscow Festival Ballet performed "Swan Lake." The silent tale tells the story of a Prince and his love for a beautiful Swan Queen, who was trapped by an evil curse. Through a case of mistaken identity the Prince almost marries another girl who looks similar to the Swan Queen. In the end he finds his true love.

"I thought it was extraordinary," Dr. Gaynell Sherrod, associate professor of dance studies said. "Moscow is one of the best trained ballet companies in the world."

Tonight that was clear to see. The precision and the poetic grace of each of the dancers was a great experience. More than just students at Florida A&M attended the ballet. Some professors, some staff and a number of locals were in attendance.

The Moscow Festival Ballet came to FAMU as a part of the Lyceum Series for the 2011- 2012 year. "There was a nice connection between the classical ballets," said Sherrod.

The Harlem Dance Theatre and the Moscow Festival Ballet have a couple of things in common. Arthur Mitchell, co-founder of Dance Theatre of Harlem studied under George Balanchine, a dancer from Moscow.

"I can't pick one part as my favorite," said Annamarie Mason, 20, a third-year animal science student. "I liked the whole thing."

The four-act ballet brought some audiences member's to tears. For some, like Mason, it brought back happy memories.

"I've been dancing for nine years," Mason said.

For others, like Shontavia Huggins, a fourth-year animal science student, this was her first ballet, ever. "I really enjoyed the performance," said Huggins. "The jester was my favorite character, he gave me life."

Mason thinks bringing the Moscow Festival Ballet to FAMU was a good idea.

"I thought it was nice and different because not everyone gets a chance to see professional ballet companies."

This week is International Awareness week on the hill and a number of different cultures have come to represent. The ballet is just one of the many.

Each act of the play had the accompaniment of incredible music. Petr Tchaikovsky was the composer for the entire ballet. Tchaikovsky is one of Russia's most celebrated composer's. He has done other pieces including The Nutcracker.

Swan Lake was also written by Tchaikovsky. It was written based on Russian folk tales. "The culture and the history of this piece speaks volumes," said Huggins.

The Moscow Festival Ballet is touring around the United States at the moment but they may be back next year.

"Exciting dance companies, musicians and lecturers are coming to the stage for the 2012-2013 Lyceum season," said Sherrod.