

Goh Ballet

Goh goes like you wouldn't believe

Just when you thought the Kelowna Community Concert Association had reached the top of its game and had nowhere to go but down, it surprises you with a concert that, in some ways, is even more glorious than the last. Mind you, in the ballet world, the Vancouver Goh Ballet Academy is a well known commodity, but most of us in the audience were simply blind-sided by the spectacular beauty and poise of these dancers.

Tuesday's concert at the Kelowna Community Theatre with its customary capacity crowd was the penultimate of the current season--and what a season it has been: absolutely top notch fare.

For some reason, the idea of a Chinese married couple coming to Canada and starting a western-style classical ballet school seemed somewhat bizarre to me. But even more surprising was the flair and precision of all the dancers--more like professionals than students.

The program didn't indicate who danced what, but a list of the dancers was given. Presumably the soloists/principals were those names in boldface. But even that didn't help much. For example, of the three male dancers, only the name of Miguel Nguyen was highlighted, but all three danced solos and all were excellent.

The program listed 20 dancers, seven of whom were Caucasian. Of the remainder, I was surprised to find more Japanese-sounding names than Chinese.

Not one of the dancers lacked grace, elegance, or beauty. Even the smiles of the ballerinas were remarkably uniform. The costumes were gorgeous, and the lighting, spot on (if you'll forgive the pun); in the so-called Jazz number in the second half, for instance, the dancers were silhouetted against a scarlet screen.

The crisp choreography and imaginative formations were mostly the work of Jia Nian Chen. I noted that the venerable founder of the company, Choo Chiat Goh, did coach the pas de deux from Adolphe Adam's Corsaire.

Two Chinese dances that ended the first half of the program were performed as a set. These, which depicted flying kites and flowing red ribbons, were great crowd pleasers.

In the second half, in what might have been a touch of Chinese Humour, the Chinese Dance from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker was danced by the only blond ballerina in the bunch.

This delightful concert came to a close with two more hits from the Nutcracker: the pas de deux of the Sugar Plum Fairy and the Waltz of the Flowers.