Versatility displayed by dance department

By Elizabeth O'Keefe
Reporter

The dance department demonstrated its versatility and creativity last Friday and Saturday nights, performing original pieces by students and instructors in jazz, toe, improvisational, modern and ballet dance.

Lighting by business junior Rob Bullard and music by various composers, including an original composition by arts senior Bill Cook, framed the dancers' movements.

Tom McCleery, completing work on his thesis for his bachelor's degree, worked with Bullard and Cook to create “Can't Relate.” McCleery described the piece as “people interacting in the city, never really relating to one another, shunning people who express themselves as individuals.”

Cook provided the “pulse” of the city with a driving synthesized rhythm. Bullard added tension to the atmosphere with intense bright lights.

Professional companies

McCleery, a Sioux Falls, S.D., native, plans on returning to the American Dance Festival this summer. The festival is a seven-week dance course that is reviewed by professional dance companies. McCleery hopes to be recruited by one of the companies.

McCleery's degree will be in dance with an emphasis on theater.

“If I lost one, either dance or theater, it would be like losing one of my arms,” McCleery said. “I'm in a school that doesn't support its arts. I'd like to see more backing from the university and students for all of the arts.”

McCleery stressed that the only way to understand art is to experience it.

Senior Linda Wieczorek performed her thesis for her bachelor of fine arts degree. Wieczorek, dressed in a white body leotard painted with an abstract black design, interpreted the music of George Crumb in her piece “Scatter.”

The music, “Voices of Ancient Children,” is part of a series of compositions by Crumb based on poetry by Federico Garcia Lorca.

Without music

“Mardi Gras,” composed by the students of modern dance classes 111 and 112, was performed without music. The students choreographed short phrases based on everyday activities, then drew cards to determine the order of the phrases. The theme of this piece was “chance.”

Chance was also involved in “Variations and Themes,” coordinated by Sandra Christopherson. The dance and music were improvised using a beginning and ending position to direct movement.

“It opens your mind — you can see anything you like in it,” said Danielle Lewis, arts freshman and member of the audience.

“Soaring” was performed in toe shoes, interpreting music by Robert Schumann. “The light, flowing movements of the music were embodied in the dancers,” arts freshman Gina Jabro said.

“The concert was creative and showed the versatility of the company,” said John Huy, a student at the University of Kansas.

“Very well done — of professional caliber,” said the Rev. Bernard Portz, S.J.