The Boston Repertory Ballet performed Carl Orff’s “Carmina Burana,” “Scenes de Ballet,” a world premiere ballet choreographed by Samuel Kurkjian and set to the music of Igor Stravinsky, and “Three Preludes” choreographed by Ben Stevenson with music by Sergei Rachmaninoff. The performances, starring Gelsey Kirkland, ran from the 11th to the 14th of February 1982 at the Opera House.

On opening night, the performance began thirty-five minutes late because of technical difficulties. The first performance, “Scenes de Ballet,” appeared to have been well not learned by either the dancers or the orchestra. The dancers had trouble two or three times with their synchronization and the orchestral accompaniment lacked definition and clear understanding of the score. “Scenes de Ballet” consisted of seven different scenes and Kurkjian put almost no separation between them so that the audience had difficulty determining where one scene ended and another began.

“Three Preludes,” however, was a drastic improvement over the previous performance. Superstar Gelsey Kirkland and John Meehan were the only two dancers accompanied on stage by a pianist performing three Preludes of Rachmaninoff. Ben Stevenson, choreographer, set off each Prelude distinctly from the rest and treated them beautifully. Stevenson brilliantly interpreted Rachmaninoff’s music in the Kirkland-Meehan pas de deux.

Carl Orff’s “Carmina Burana” was the main performance of the evening. Samuel Kurkjian gave a very contemporary interpretation to Orff’s ballet, a mixture of medieval themes and modern jazz, joy, lust and of classical and modern ballet. Accompanying the dancers was the 120-member Paul Madore Chorus and a full-scale symphony orchestra. The performance, however, was not entirely successful. The orchestra gave a mediocre performance of the score, and there still seemed to be some technical difficulties with the setting of the arrangements of the chorus. The different themes of the score seem to drift into one another without much contrast, and the contemporary dress and dancing made these themes blend together. The 120-member chorus gave a rewarding performance with the lead tenor giving an exceptional performance. The dancers delivered some lively performances, but all in all, the production was hampered by technical difficulties and a performance that seemed rushed and not well learned.

Jonathan P. Dippert

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