

Katie Doi

Mr. Bengford

Tech Theatre II/4

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IndepenDANCE 2009

On Friday May 8th, I watched IndepenDANCE 2009, a show created by students and faculty members of the Independence High School Dance Department. There were three student directors: Chaela Cristobal, Katie Marshall, and Melanie Waymire. The show also had artistic director, Kellye Dodd, and associate director, Cristina McClelland. The show was composed of eighteen dances, each with their own choreographers, most of whom were students. Each dance also had a dance captain. The dance captain is a student that is in charge of dance rehearsals. All of the dances had their own concepts and different styles of dance, displaying the many talents of the dancers in IndepenDANCE.

I was impressed by the costumes for all of the dances. The costume designer's name was not listed. In most of the dances everyone had similar costumes with variations in color. For example, in the dance Underground Vibes, everyone wore hoodies, basketball shorts, bandanas, and black shoes. These costumes gave an urban look that matched with the hip-hop style music and dance. The costumes were color coordinated. Half the dancers had grey hoodies and blue bandanas in their shorts, while the other half had blue hoodies with grey bandanas. In the dance Ninfa de Noche, the nymph had a beautiful costume. It was a handkerchief dress made of multicolored chiffon with a floral wash. The translucent chiffon flowed when she danced, giving her an ethereal appearance. During the dance MIKArazy, I thought the costumes were very cute. They blended the

concept very well. The costumes were youthful, bright, and colorful, like the music. The jazz dancers had white capris with solid colored polo shirts that were tied at the chest. Each of the jazz dancers was wearing a color that matched with one of the tap dancers. The tap dancers wore colored long sleeve scoop neck shirts with white overalls that were rolled above the ankle. My favorite costumes were from the dance The Sorcerer's Apprentice. This dance was based on J.W. Goethe's ballad "Der Zauberlehrling" and Disney's Fantasia. I have not seen this movie but the costumes looked very familiar. The sorcerer wore a blue robe and a blue hat with silver stars. The apprentice wore a red tunic tied at the waist with a rope, like Mickey. The flowers the sorcerer brings to life are beautiful. They had pink and green dresses that sparkled. The broom costumes were really creative. They wore dark brown tank tops, lighter brown gaucho pants, and grass skirts. The grass skirts effectively gave the impression of the bristles on a broom. The broom that was animated first had long twigs in her hair to set her apart from the "army" of brooms. The water costumes were adorable. The pants were my favorite part of their outfits. They were short aquamarine balloon pants with a velvety sheen. They were similar to water droplets in the way they curved around the bottoms. Their tops were also velvety cerulean blue. There were slight variations, some were halters and some were turtlenecked tank tops. The water dancers also held shiny streamers and white silks to show streams of water flowing and flying. The costume designs were creative and interesting. They blended the dances with the music and the concepts.

I was also impressed by the lighting designs by the student designers. The first dance, Escape from Ennui, was designed by Kevin Ly. When the dance began, the cyclorama was cyan, there was no other light onstage and made the dancers' silhouettes

stand out. Then the areas come up with a light blue wash revealing the whole company. The dance continues then the center special comes up while the other areas dim, highlighting the main dancers. Then the company comes back in a diagonal line across the stage from upstage left to downstage right. Only the areas in their diagonal path were up to highlight their path. Most of the gel colors for this dance were blue. Blue evokes many feelings. It often has a calming effect as well as saddening effect. Ennui is boredom from lack of interest, the indifference caused by overwhelming the feeling of stagnancy where one is weary and unhappy with life. The color choices helped to set this mood to match the concept of this dance. I also enjoyed the lighting in Ninfa de Noche. This design was created by Pamela Melvin. This design did not use their cyclorama. Instead the upstage blacks were closed and lit by the far cycs. The black duvetine created a soft texture with the way it caught the light. The light did not overwhelm the black fabric giving it a dark look. The fluted curtain also created an interesting texture. The dim lighting created the feeling of a mysterious forest at night. They also used bright sidelights that create harsh shadows, highlighting the dancers' bodies. They were placed between the borders and also gave the effect of light coming through the cracks between trees in a forest. The upstage blacks were light with a dark forest green and the side lights were bare. There was also a special in the downstage right corner to highlight the nymph's starting and ending position. The colors were very natural and created the feeling of a quiet forest at night. The Sorcerer's Apprentice was designed by José Toral. They used a very cool effect during the water sequence. The cyc was an aqua color and to show the rippling effect of water they had people tapping and shaking corners of the cyc. It was very effective and beautiful. The lights also created the perfect mood during the

scene where the apprentice hacked the broom to “death”. The stage and cyc were covered in a blood red wash. Sangre’s lights were designed by Matthew Lim. The cyc is dark grey blue, giving a sorrowful feeling. The dance was about two sisters in love with the same man. One sister is engaged to this man and the other tries to hide her feelings. She suddenly acts on them and in the end; the man is accidentally shot by his fiancé. The storyline is very grim and is matched with the somber colors and the melancholy cello. I felt all design elements worked together very nicely to deliver cohesive story. One of my favorite lighting designs was by Preciliana De Anda for the dance URBNethiks. The dance begins with a swirling galaxy gobo center stage. Then the red cyc light fades in revealing their silhouettes then the area lights fade in revealing their faces. They also used bright sidelights creating harsh shadows on the dancers’ features. The intense upbeat music, swirling galaxy, red cyc gave the feeling of an impending apocalypse.

I thoroughly enjoyed IndepenDANCE 2009. I was impressed by the great dancing and the tech work. I thought their PowerPoint transitions were very nice. They were very interesting and helped to recognize all the people that contributed to each dance. I enjoyed seeing my friend Lisa dance. I had no idea she was such a great dancer and I have not seen her in years. I was a little disappointed with the finale. Last year’s finale was crazy and all over the place; there were trampolines, neon, bubbles, and more. It really left me in awe. This year, however did not leave me with the same reaction. It was very nice, but it was not amazing. In one section with the clowns, a girl gets a pie in the face; it ended up being hazardous. Some of the cream had landed onstage and many of the dancers had to dance around it. However, there was one girl that was not as lucky and slipped while she was heading offstage. I was very worried for her. IndepenDANCE is

always interesting, and it is different each year because of the amount of creativity that the different students bring to each production. IndependANCE was amazing and I cannot wait to see what they bring next year.