

arts/entertainment

Feld Ballet dances a pure, not faultless, show

By Penelope Smith

Thursday night the Feld Ballet evoked the sense of ambivalent detachment that tends to form from pure, but not faultless, entertainment.

"Harbinger," the first piece of the evening, was a definite disappointment. Created in 1967, it is indeed a harbinger for a fine choreographic style to come, but

carries all the uneasy symptoms of Feld at 24, still searching for a choreographic mode.

It exemplifies a Feld still under the influence of George Balanchine. Mature Feld utilizes a loose-limbed jazz technique integrated with a flowing, classical vocabulary. In "Harbinger," there is still a hint of Balanchine tension without the exact estimation of force and cutting precision that makes it choreographically valid.

At its best moments "Harbinger" displayed an undulating whimsicality and expert handling of a large corps that would become a Feld trademark. Such sections as the Ferris wheel movement of a woman by two partners, to a hypnotic continuous series of notes in the score, come immediately to mind.

The work was not enhanced by a watery rendition of Prokofiev's "Concerto No. 5 for Piano and Orchestra," missing a lot of the volume and tension. At times the movement and music were badly integrated to the point of parallelism.

"Anatomic Balm," in contrast, had a flashy efficacy that exemplifies Feld at his best. His time on Broadway shows through with a joyous glittering theatricality. The dancers, in pristine white and rainbow hues, flowed from a sensuous free slow-motion stroll to a melodramatic, "He done her wrong" flailing that was perfectly integrated with a ragtime score.

Feld's dancers were in their stylistic element. Nothing was really sustained nor was there any stress on virtuosity in the classical ballet sense. What came across was a high energy Broadway sense of entertainment that left the audience breathless and enthused. Of special note was the performance of Christine Sarry. Sarry has an exceptional presence that can vary from Chaplinesque to Perils of Pauline, equally delighting the audience and herself.

The final selection of the evening, "A Footstep of Air" was a foray into Feld's playful tongue-in-cheek sense of humor.

He made a successful poke at the pastoral element in so many classical ballets by gaily tripping over the fine line between the bucolic and the ludicrous. He further marked the sheer delightful absurdity of the work by choreographing it to the Celtic folk song arrangements of Beethoven and using costumes that looked like the result of a crazed and colorblind Celt's taste in plaids.

The more blatant mime pauses were picked up more quickly than the more subtle choreographic humor of the piece. Consequently, there were stretches of uneasiness where people weren't sure if it was proper to laugh or not. A great deal of this was no fault of Feld's, but rather one of erroneous indoctrination of the idea that ballet is art, and that no matter how terrible or ludicrous one may find it, one should never laugh because art and artists are terribly serious.

The Feld Ballet cannot be faulted for its performance or its energy, but there was a vague feeling of superficiality that was not worthy of the democratic ovation given by the audience.



Photo courtesy of Lois Greenfield/The Feld Ballet
The Eliot Feld Ballet performed Nov. 6-8 at Kimball Recital Hall.

Daytime TV cures bedridden adults

I think that one of the functions of daytime television is to give adults who are bedridden with illness something to do. It does for sick adults what the traditional "mommy" did for sick children: Enticing them into downing bowls of hot soup and

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taking plenty of aspirin, and keeping an eye on them.

More importantly, it takes the place of those activity kits that little kids were supposed to have (I never had one myself, but I have often heard that such kits exist), with things like Tinker toys and puzzles and models that one could do mindlessly. Instead of Tinker toys and puzzles, though, television offers game shows, soap operas, etc. These shows are the networks way of rubbing a little intellectual Mentholatum onto your virus-infested chest.

Take, for example, the average daytime game show. But don't think of it as a game show, instead think of it as the "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Ailsick Bag and Smile, Smile, Smile Fun Activity Kit." The game show has a simple task: to cheer you up, to tell you that you should hurry up and get well soon because the world is a big and wonderful place. The host, be it Richard Dawson or Wink Martindale or the ageless Bob Barker, comes out smiling.

The contestants enter. First, our challenger, a student at UCLA and aspiring actress, Ms. Francis Olive, careens around the curtain and smiles at the host. Then, our champion, Mrs. Olive Francis, a housewife and mother of two (two what? I always ask) who has won \$9,750 so far, sits

in her chair and smiles. Then everybody wins some money, and smiles some more. It's a lot like a Get Well card, in that it gives you a misleading picture of what awaits you when you do get well, what probably made you sick in the first place.

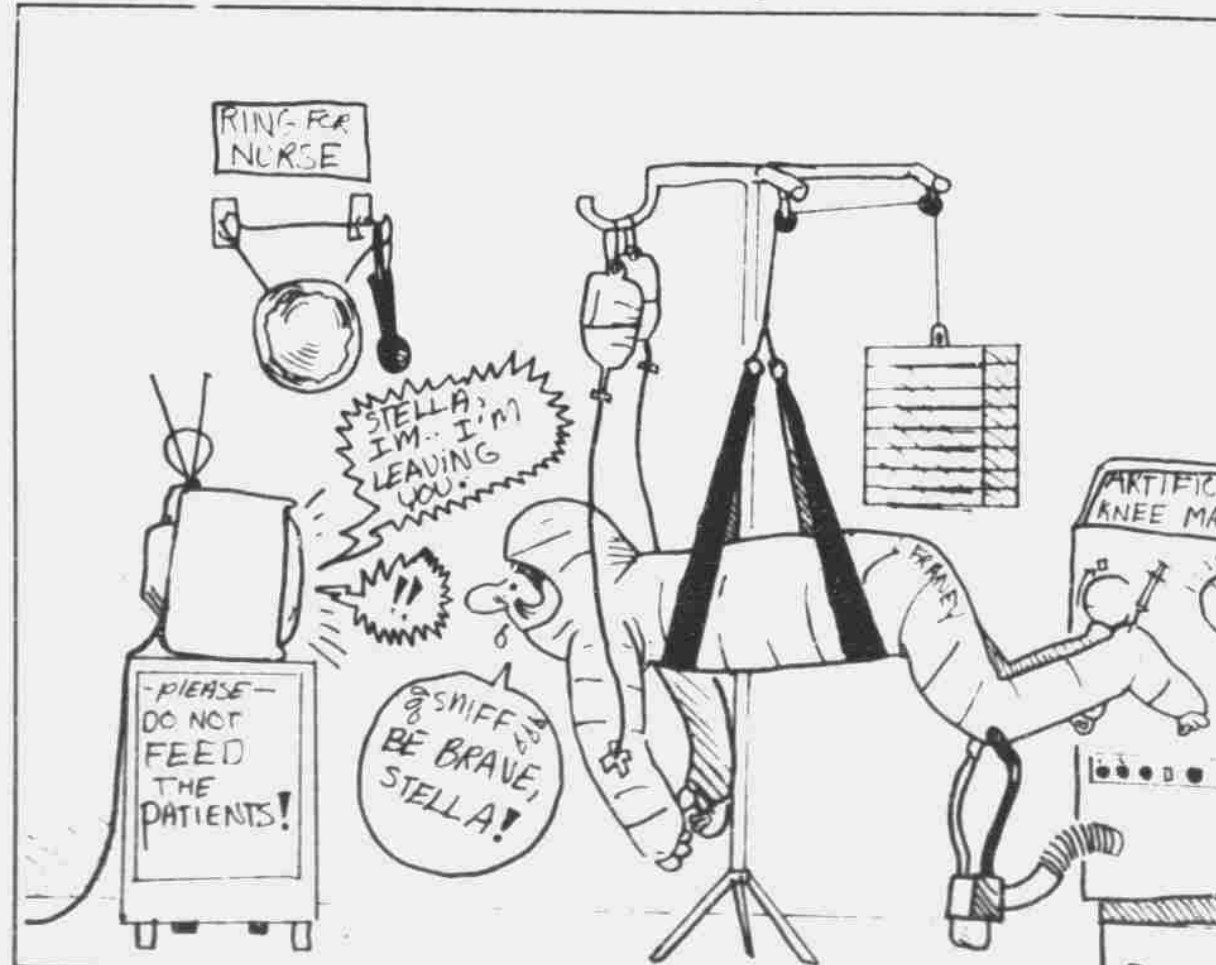
Soap operas work on the recuperating adult with reverse psychology. Think of them as the "Misery Loves Company Activities Kit." To a flu-ridden adult, a soap opera comes out and says, "Sure you're sick, so what? Count your blessings, Bozo, and look what's wrong with us!

"Mandy is pregnant by either Phillip or Dave. She wants to keep the baby, but Dave doesn't. She would marry Phil, who

does want the baby, but who's to say that the curious straight jacket in his wardrobe isn't something he really should be wearing all the time?

"You should be glad that all you are is sick. I mean, you could be living in the same town with us!"

You don't have to like daytime television, but you have to appreciate how effective it is with illness. A couple of days ago I thought I was on the verge of death. Vultures were holding a lottery for rights to my house. But after just two days of daytime television, I told myself, "Nobody is this sick," and jumped back into the swing of life.



UPC to feature drama, dance at both unions

The University Program Council will sponsor Sense The Arts this week at both the Nebraska Union and East Campus Union. In addition to the following schedule, more attractions are expected.

Monday, Nov. 10

All day: Visual display by the Lincoln Quilters Guild.

8:00 p.m. Regency Suite "Dessert Theater." Two new experimental plays, *Porch Sale* and *Three Cowboys Three* by UNL theater graduate student Dale Wilson. Admission: \$1.50 UNL Student Donation, \$2 Non-Student Donation

Tuesday, Nov. 11

10:00 a.m. Main Lounge Jek Kelly Juggling and Comedy.

1:30-2:30 p.m. Main Lounge Nebraska School of Gymnastics.

8:00 p.m. Regency Suite Dessert Theater.

Wednesday, Nov. 12

9:00 a.m. Main Lounge Stained glass artwork by King Glass of Lincoln.

2:00-3:00 p.m. Main Lounge UNL Dancers.

4:00 p.m. Main Lounge Nebraska School of Gymnastics.

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