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Ballet rocks captive crowd

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

A gossamer white blur leaped across the stage, manipulating her space and filling the air with the magic of motion.

Rock music thundered in the background as figures dressed in neon wigs and technicolor spandex thrusted themselves onto each other.

A single girl, dressed in shimmering satin with her face painted white, threw herself into the air, onto the floor and into the hearts of her captive audience.

Ballet — Joffrey style.

The Joffrey Ballet, directed and conceived by Gerald Arpino and set to the music of pop star Prince, performed three dates at the Lied Center this weekend.

The ballet consisted of four parts of Prince's music: "Sometimes it Snows in April," choreographed by Laura Dean; "Thunder/Purple Rain," choreographed by Charles Moulton; "Slide," choreographed by Margo Sappington; and "Willing and Able," choreographed by Peter Pucci.

Each piece was a paradox of traditional ballet moves with the flashy and powerful choreography of a rock ballet.

"Sometimes" flowed with eloquence and tender movements like snowflakes twirling and swirling

to the ground. Fluid waves of motion enveloped the dancers as they engaged in a type of courtship dance.

The movement picked up and became more forceful as the guitar and vocals were drenched with passion and intensity. A male dancer picked up a female dancer and swirled her in the air, slightly dipping her in rhythm. It was absolutely compelling.

The troupe came out in "Chorus Line" fashion. The life and energy were so vivid in the dancers' movements and faces it was hard not to be motivated.

The dancers were acrobats as they threw themselves into the air in a series of tiger jumps and mid-air splits. They made it look so easy, but it was not hard to tell they were professional athletes.

Prince shouted out, "Hey look me over/ Tell me if you like what you see," and the audience screamed with reply. All those audience members who dropped dance when they were young probably wished they would have kept those pointe shoes after seeing how much fun the dancers were having.

During the first of three intermissions, a middle-aged man in business suit shrugged and sheepishly said to his friends, "Well, I kind of liked the music, myself."

The music lent to the shock value of "Thunders," as a troupe of

clownishly dressed dancers galloped onto the stage pushing and shoving, bumping and grinding. A gold lamé she-devil tempted them and fed their intense sexual appetites.

"Purple Rain's" main dancer, Meg Gurin, gave a performance that words could not begin to describe. Her movements were controlled expressions of freedom and flight. A sincere craving showed in her face as her body leapt, crawled and fought its way through space and time.

She started off wearing a white satin "clown" suit and later shed it to reveal a skin-tight gold lamé bodysuit that reflected a red beam of light at the end.

"Slide" was an elaboration of a daily workout. The light poles were bared and dancers were visible in the wings. The dancers moved casually, but with erotic bumps and turns. They seemed, at times, to be moving in freeze-frame photography.

The final piece, "Willing and Able," began with dancing silhouettes against a backdrop of a panel of white lights. In fact, the colored lights in various disco patterns added movement to the dancers already vivacious art.

"Billboards" was an incredible, "traffic stopping" performance. Someone remarked, "It was like a dream, only more intense."

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FORUM ON WORLD ISSUES

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Rushworth M. Kidder

**Shared Values, Troubled Times:
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Rushworth M. Kidder, is the founder and president of The Institute for Global Ethics and former senior editor of The Christian Science Monitor. Kidder interviewed 22 opinion makers around the world for a series that grew into his book exploring the topic of global ethics, *An Agenda for the 21st Century*.

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