

Orpheum to showcase 'Swan Lake'

BY LIZA HOLTMEIER
Staff Reporter

The seduction of evil or the purity of light?

A fairly weighty question for a young prince just coming of age.

Fortunately for Prince Siegfried, evil and its nemesis are in the less threatening forms of a black and a white swan.

This weekend, the Dayton Ballet will present Siegfried's classic battle with evil in its Omaha production of the romantic ballet "Swan Lake."

"Swan Lake" is what Derrick Wilder, managing director of Ballet Omaha, calls "a white ballet": a lavish production filled with ballerinas in white tutus.

"It's one of the greats - like 'Giselle' or 'Les Sylphides,'" Wilder said. "It's known all over the world."

Wilder added that many credit "Swan Lake" with ushering in the romantic era of Russian classical ballet. With a dramatic score by Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky, the image of ballerinas as swans has solidified this ballet in the minds of many ballet enthusiasts.

Considering the ballet's current status, it is rather ironic to note the premiere of "Swan Lake" failed.

When the Bolshoi first performed the ballet in 1877, a number of problems plagued the production.

However, in 1895, "Swan Lake" received a make-over by the Marinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, Russia. Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov recreated the ballet, clarifying the story line and using their own choreography.

The Petipa-Ivanov rendition established the traditions for "Swan Lake" in the 20th century. Their version tells the story of Prince Siegfried, a young man who has come of age and must assume responsibilities of the throne.

Longing to be alone, Siegfried retreats to the lake during a hunting party. While there, he meets Odette, one of several young maidens turned into a swan by the evil magician Rothbart. Rothbart's spell can only be broken if a man pledges his true love to Odette, the Swan Queen.

The Dayton Ballet production retains the original story line but is choreographed by East Coast choreographer Septime Webre and former Kirov ballerina Elaina Tchernichova.

Webre set the production in pre-World War I among the upper class of New York. Siegfried is no longer a prince but the son of a wealthy family. Rothbart is no longer an evil magician but an accomplice to Siegfried's overbearing mother.

Beth Common, marketing director for Dayton Ballet, said the production maintained the strengths of the Russian version while adding new twists.

"(The audience wants) to see the Black Swan do the 30 turns. They want to see the swans by the lake. Therefore, the swan acts are all very true to the original," Common said.

Wilder added that Webre's choreography updated the ballet.

"In ballet, you have to follow the rules. A plié is a plié is a plié," Wilder said. "When you choreograph, the trick is to take these steps that are 100 years old and make them look new and original."

The Dayton Ballet will perform "Swan Lake" at the Orpheum Theater, 409 S. 16th St., in Omaha. Performances are Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. To order tickets, call the Ballet Omaha Box Office at (402) 346-7332.

Lil' Ed brings blues to town The band promises a hard-rocking performance

BY JASON HARDY
Assignment Reporter

Concert Preview

About 23 years ago, Lil' Ed Williams was working at Chicago's Red Carpet Car Wash, while his brother, James "Pookie" Young, drove a school bus.

Back then the two were just trying to make ends meet. Nowadays they're one of the world's best blues bands. Tonight they'll be at the Zoo Bar.

The world famous Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials will be rocking the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St., this weekend with two boogie-filled performances, one tonight and another Saturday night.

Lil' Ed is known for putting on high-energy performances with intense slide guitar

licks and crazy dance moves. He said this weekend would be as wild as ever.

"Man, I like to move around on stage and do duck walks and walk on my toes," Williams said. "I wish I could do a flip, because when I get into the music, I get really excited. I have to move, man. I can't stay still."

He said he's been working on a lot of new material since he played on the Zoo Bar's stage last June. He said he hoped Lincoln was ready for him again.

"They can expect a nice, wild show 'cause I got a lot of stuff to lay on them."



LIL' ED (second from left) and the Blues Imperials will play at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St., tonight and Saturday.

COURTESY PHOTO

"I have to move, man, I can't stay still."

LIL' ED WILLIAMS
blues musician

Williams said. "Look out for some good rockin' blues when I get in town 'cause I'm ready to go."

Williams said it often was the crowd that motivated him to keep playing hard show after show.

"When you soak up that energy, you just want to do it all night long," Williams said.

"You don't really know how long you're up there until you're just about

ready to fall off."

Larry Boehmer, owner of the Zoo Bar, agreed that Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials put on memorable performances.

"Ed's a wild man," Boehmer said. "He really generates a lot of energy."

Boehmer said Williams' style was reminiscent of the late slide guitar legend J.B. Hutto, who also was Williams' uncle.

"It's totally uncanny how much he sounds like him," Boehmer said. "His guitar playing and vocals are dead on."

He said he was looking forward to watching Williams take the stage again like his uncle did years ago.

"His uncle used to play here all the time. He was a regular at the Zoo in the old days," Boehmer said.

Williams said his uncle taught him and his brother, who plays bass in the band, everything they knew about the blues. Now Williams is trying to pay him back by keeping the family's blues style alive.

"He had a really unique sound. You don't hear it nowhere," Williams said. "Now I've picked it up, because I want that to be heard all over."

"Basically, I've walked in his footsteps all these years because I learned from him, and I promised I'd keep his tradition going. That's from the heart."

Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials perform tonight and Saturday at the Zoo Bar. Both shows start at 9 p.m. and have a \$6 cover charge.

Rare 'Old Masters' featured at Joslyn

BY SARAH BAKER
Senior Reporter

They're old. They're masters. And they're making their first visit to the United States this weekend.

Twenty-seven old master paintings are the focal point of "Old Masters Brought to Light: European Paintings From the National Museum of Art of Romania," which opens at the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha on Saturday.

Claudia Einecke, assistant curator of European art at the Joslyn, said the collection presents a full survey of the main painters of the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

A tour of these old master paintings is a very rare occurrence, so rare in fact that most of them have never been seen before in the United States.

But Einecke said that isn't the only reason to come and take a look at the works.

"I think whether these works have been seen in the U.S. or not is not the important part," she said. "The important fact is that these are really great works of art. They are of very high quality, and we usually don't get the chance to see works of this magnitude in Nebraska."

"There are really no big collections of old masters in the Midlands," Einecke said. "This is a unique comprehensive picture of the art of the 15th to the 17th centuries."

The majority of the paintings in the

"It is a really spectacular show."

CLAUDIA EINECKE
assistant curator of European art

show are Italian masters and are mostly of religious subject matter.

Linda Rajcevic, marketing director at the Joslyn, said the religious subjects are a good representation of the era.

"The religious themes really capture the area of work that was being done at that point," Rajcevic said. "The show just gives you the chance to look at beautiful paintings."

The exhibit features paintings done by various Renaissance artists, including El Greco and Rembrandt.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for us, because it is very rare for us to receive an old masters show in the Midwest," Rajcevic said.

Einecke said she thought the exhibit will have something for everyone.

"It's hard to talk about the actual quality of the works, it depends on the individual's taste," she said. "There are a range of different styles, and they all speak to different people in different ways. It is a really spectacular show."

"Old Masters Brought to Light: European Paintings from the National Museum of Art in Romania" opens at



COURTESY PHOTO

REMBRANDT HARMENSZ VAN RIJN's painting, "Haman Begging the Mercy of Esther," will be among the works by the Old Masters on display at the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha starting this Saturday.

Joslyn Art Museum, 2200 Dodge Street in Omaha Saturday. A schedule of guided public tours is available. Tours are free with regular museum admission.

Museum hours are Tuesday,

Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. For more information, call Joslyn Art Museum at (402) 342-3300.