

Dance Review – Ballet des Ameriques – The Nutcracker Ball –

by Frank DeLigio

Discipline is not a concept that puts a smile on one's face.

Not ordinarily.

Not mine.

But this past weekend, Ballet des Ameriques of Port Chester, N.Y. had me grinning broadly at one display after another of discipline.

The Nutcracker Ball is a collection of twenty six short dances – some from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker, some not – performed by the troop and the school that are Ballet des Ameriques.

Here's the thing. When kids dance together there are those moments – you expect them - when a little girl falls out of step, or turns the wrong way or slips, stumbles and totally charms everyone in the audience.

Well, this weekend, in the two performances of The Nutcracker Ball that I saw, it never happened.

Everyone danced impeccably.

No kidding.

Yet, I was charmed from start to finish.

What charmed me was the commitment of these dancers from the youngest to the oldest, the tyro to the professional, displayed on their faces, in their posture, in their demeanor and, most of all, in their strong, joyful, confident dancing.

They smiled with pride.

The Dying Swan of Isodale Alexis, whose arms have become the fragile wings they represent; the gorgeous Arabian of Irene Przywara, so supple and seductive; Alexandrina Ina Rose Bocca's Incantation and Louise Galopin's Invocation, both serious, earthy modern dances – these evoke admiration and respect.

But the other dances, classics like Hope Ruth's Fille Mal Gardee and Blue Bird/Florine, Jenna Simon in the Nutcracker excerpts, brought smiles that broadened considerably as the students of all ages dazzled with their synchronized execution of steps that played to their strengths yet challenged them.

Of course, the Director, Carole Alexis is most responsible for the glow that emanates from these dancers. She teaches, she instills the love of this discipline, she choreographs most of these dances that bring out the very best in her students and professionals.

Over the years, the performances by Ballet des Ameriques have steadily improved as the dancers have studied and practiced and grown.

This weekend's Nutcracker Ball raised the bar even higher.

It gives one hope that there are bigger, broader smiles to come next December.