

on stage

"The Glass Menagerie" Oregon Repertory Theatre

Tiny animals of colored glass fill the life of Laura, a shy crippled girl who has separated herself from the world of reality to the world of fragility in "The Glass Menagerie," an Oregon Repertory Theatre production of Tennessee Williams' play of hope and despair.

Laura, portrayed by Rebecca Proctor, is a frail wallflower. Self-consciously averting her eyes and quivering like a frightened rabbit when attention is focused upon her, she retires into her world of delicate glass animals and an old Victrola phonograph, the two pastimes that fill the void of in her life since a high school illness left her slightly crippled.

Proctor's otherwise convincing portrayal of Laura is flawed slightly because she just isn't wispy or breakable enough to bring off the "handle with care" fragility Laura's character demands.

Laura's mother, Amanda (played by Jacquie McClure) an aggravating busybody whose husband left her six years ago, genuinely cares for her two children, but her obsession with finding a suitable husband for her 24-year-old daughter, who has never had a single gentleman caller, traumatizes her shy daughter and irritates her cynical son.

Wondering how many "gentlemen callers" will visit Laura one evening, Amanda doesn't hesitate to tell her children for the umpteenth time that "your mother once received 17 gentlemen callers in a single afternoon." Laura, as usual, receives not a one.

Amanda's character portrayal would've been more believable had McClure exuded a hard-bitten attitude toward life's bitter twists. A woman coping with life's ironies could elicit more audience sympathy for her desperate actions,



photo by erich boekehelder

Ken Hof, Jacquie McClure and Rebecca Proctor star in the ORT's production of "The Glass Menagerie."

done only out of desire for a better life for her daughter.

Ken Hof is superb as Amanda's son Tom, the narrator, and sensitive — if not cynical — poet.

His dry wit and knowing chuckling under his breath at Amanda's eccentricities give way to quick fits of anger when he can endure his mother's incessant badgering and hounding no longer.

Disturbed that he must work in a shoe factory to support his mother and sister, Tom, often in a huff, escapes — much to Amanda's dismay and Laura's anxiety — to "go to the movies." The trips

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Ballet, folk, modern genres

'Dance '82' combines styles

"Dance '82", an impressive program of varied dance selections, opened to an enthusiastic audience Friday night. Although the dances were skillfully performed, it lacked a sense of cohesiveness and emotional impact that would have given it a much stronger punch.

Marking its 21st anniversary, "Dance '82" is a cooperative venture between The Concert Dance Theatre and the Dobre Folk Ensemble, and is co-produced by the Department of Dance and the University Theatre.

Two classical ballet pieces with modern movements that stand out especially — "Andante" and "Ribbons" — are finely crafted works.

"Andante" is a moderately slow pas de deux plus one of carefully constructed sensitivity. It examines the flow of love relationships, and is performed by David Berkey, Catheriene Guerin, and Caroline Schell.

Choreographed by Susan Zadoff, "Andante" lends a sweet sadness as a lone dancer intricately follows the movements of a couple beside her. Sometimes they intertwine, but more often, she is alone. The resolution of this piece is moving and beautifully done.

"Ribbons," choreographed by David Berkey and accompanied by Pachelbel's wistful "Canon in D," is a springtime dance of frills and frivolity, of gentility and growing up.

Four dancers, Barbara DeSassie, Louise Green-Mares, Deanna Livsey and Susan McFadden, give a spritely and enjoyable performance in a pastel and pretty look at adolescence.

Unfortunately, many of the other performances lacked the emotional intensity of "Andante" and "Ribbons." Many were too controlled and needed enlivening. "An Evening at the Cock & Bull" was one such performance.

For the 18th century piece, the Dobre Folk Ensemble did a fine job of constructing a phy-

sically authentic pub atmosphere of that time period with its use of costumes and set.

However, the pub-goers were too restrained. Some on-stage banter would have added greatly to audience enjoyment, with hoopla and general shouts of good cheer — basically, the involvement of 18th century people having fun. Since dialogue was already introduced, the ensemble could have gone further, built characters and added time period believability.

With the exception of Susan Wheeler, who provided a particularly lively solo, the ensemble needs to develop its stage presence to better show off its historical dances.

Though the skill of the artists is undeniable and the quality of the work is quite evident, it would have been a great benefit to "Dance '82" had there been a general theatrical director to tie the dances together. Between the distraction of constant intermissions and the distinctly different flavors of the different dances, the program lacked continuity, making the program flow less smoothly than it might have.

In general, relationships between the dancers could have been better explored in several pieces to give that added polish — that extra something — to the finished product. An overall theatrical director could have helped provide that extra punch.

On the whole, "Dance '82" is a delightful evening, and the audience appreciated it. "There's Love In Them There Hills", an energetic jazz-funk number choreographed by Caroline Schell, left the audience cheering.

The cast of "Dance '82" deserves this appreciation. For those who respect the arduous training and discipline of a dance, "Dance '82" is a good example of the beauty and elegance that most can only aspire to in dreams.

by debbi roberts

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