



Cat Power croons the blues in Portland

All photos by Andrea Simpson Clackamas Print

ABOVE: Cat Power's lead singer Chan Marshall sings huskily into the microphone in front of the band. The drummer Jim White (behind) kept a solid beat going throughout the entire night. RIGHT: Gregg Foreman, the piano and organ player, takes a long drag from his cigarette as his other hand quickly dances its way along the keys. He also sang background vocals in one of the songs.

Rhythmically delightful music flows out of the Roseland Theater on April 13.

Emily Walters

Arts & Culture Editor

Smooth, velvety simplicity cast a spell over a varied audience at the Roseland Theater on the evening of April 13.

The downtown Portland venue was host to the bluesy-alternative group Cat Power, with the support of the French band Appaloosa.

The concert was part of Cat Power's current tour for the band's most recent album, "Jukebox," which covers records from many of the music elite, such as Frank Sinatra and Janis Joplin, to name just a couple.

Anne Laure of Appaloosa opened the show, wearing a glittery, strapless, teal dress with a black leather jacket. She took up the first 30 minutes with several songs, including "L'Amour Hard" and "The Day We Fell in Love."

While the blend of Laure's voice with a synthesizer was not terrible, her performance might have been more enjoyable if her dancing had not looked like a rabbit doing jumping jacks, which put her outfit in constant danger of falling down.

When Cat Power took over the stage, vocalist Chan Marshall instantly began to hypnotize with her raspy-chocolate voice.

Marshall stepped in front of the crowd attired in tight black jeans and an olive button-up top, completing her ensemble with a messily-tied black tie and white lace-up flats. With the smoking piano and organ player Gregg

Foreman, guitarist Jim White, bass player Erik Padilla, and drummer Jim White, Cat Power waltzed through the night.

Among the biggest hits of the night was "Ramblin' on My Mind," a cover of the song originally attributed to Hank Williams during which Marshall crooned "some folks say/I ain't no good," which would find hard to believe hearing her.

Another was the band's version of one of Cat Power's older songs, "Meat and Potatoes," mixed to perfection with warbling guitar, soft crashing cymbals.

"Silver Stallion" was a different direction, reminiscent of old-time music — no surprise, originally by The Highwaymen, with Foreman accompanying in the background.

The most entrancing, though, was Patsy Cline's "I Got You," which had a slower beat that allowed her unique interpretation to shine through.

The band slowly broke for a break amidst clapping, leaving a consistent beat echoing the crowd. It was a beautiful organ, before the group reassembled to the fantastic performance.

For more information on dates and to hear Cat Power, go to myspace.com.



The Grand Tour comes to life at the Oregon Ballet Theatre

Andrea Simpson

The Clackamas Print

The Oregon Ballet Theatre opened the third installment of its Grand Tour series Friday, April 18, to a nearly sold-out auditorium. The America program consisted of three works and two intermissions.

The first work, "Through Eden's Gates," is a ballet set to ragtime and jazz music with contemporary moves integrated in a surprisingly natural cadence. The music is composed by Pacific Northwest native William Bolcom and choreographed by Kent Stowell.

Traveling in patterns and eventually coming together in synchrony before twirling offstage, the dancers engage in rounds of high-flying kicks to start the show.

One of the highlights of the solo and duet performances that followed was that of Alison Roper and Ronnie Underwood. Roper and Underwood executed a dance that smacked of extremely flirty, salsa-inspired movements. They even did hip sways that would have made Elvis proud. The sexual attraction between the couple was almost palpable and undeniably turned up the temperature in the theater.

Another stand-out routine was carried out by ballerina Yuka Iino. In the scene "Fast, Furious," Iino used sharp and abstract motions to illustrate the range of the ballet. When joined by five male dancers on stage, she proved how quirky and seductive she could be, both fending off and enticing the men.

The ballet ended in a reprise of its beginning, with thunderous applause from the audience.

In the next ballet of the production, "Just," the performers conveyed a message that spoke to the beauty of two human bodies moving together and the harmony they can create.

In contrast to the previous piece, the music of "Just" is more classical, featuring a variety of odd instruments such as the jalatarang — a set of ceramic bowls that produce a range of non-specific pitches when struck.

The costumes played an interesting role. They were designed to look like the crossing ribbons on ballet pointe shoes. The imagery gave the feeling of everything being stripped away, leaving one remaining focus: the dance.

The costumes were very simple, there was no set and the movements were distinctly modern. At one point, dancer Artur Sultanov soloed to music that sounded like a ticking clock, and his choppy, jerky motions reflected the passing of time.

"Just" is composed by Henry Cowell and choreographed by Trey McIntyre.

The third and final ballet presented was "Slaughter on Tenth Ave." This combination of ballet and show-dancing is set within the 1936 Broadway musical "On your Toes," choreographed by legend George Balanchine. In a time when American ballet was still establishing roots, Balanchine took it to Broadway, and this piece definitely dates itself in the 1930s.

The plot involves a love triangle between a ballerina, a ballet dancer and the choreographer. Throw a gangster waiting in the actual audience into the mix, and it is more of a comedy routine than a ballet.

The dance is a combination of ballet, jazz and tap. Kathi Martuza, as a striptease girl, was brilliant in the way she perfectly blended ballet and subtle striptease elements.

In light of the dramatic storyline, much of the dancing in this production comes in the form of exceedingly exaggerated moves, keeping the audience in stitches.

The America program at OBT demonstrates that ballet is not simply set to classical music and catered to a high-brow audience. With popular dances like the Charleston and bits of

seduction, the show connects with individuals from all walks of life.

Ballet is alive and well at the Oregon Ballet Theatre. The show runs April 18 through 27 and is followed by a Russian program June 6 through 8.

