

Cavalía: Equestrian ballet prances onto stage



Left: Kati Cox shares a moment with her horse Cisco after a Cavalía performance.

Right: Gregory Molina gazes at suspended arial acrobat.

The show continues until Dec. 4.



Photos by Brad Heinicke *The Clackamas Print*

By Isaac Soper
The Clackamas Print

After gallivanting down a side street that was under construction, I finally reached the enormous white big top. Without looking too conspicuous, I followed an older gentleman who seemed to know where he was going and we entered through the glass doors into a central chamber. A short woman with dark, curly hair directed me to the media entrance into the ballet known only as "Cavalía."

I reached what seemed to be a point of no return, the man in front of me was on the list, I alas, was not. I used my wit and boyish charm to gain entrance. A woman dressed in black commanded that I follow her; I obeyed.

The air was hot as I was guided down the darkened corridor by the woman in black. Booming music could be heard behind the visage of darkness. As I reached the end of the corridor, the music gained clarity and volume and dim lights appeared. I found a seat near the right of the stage.

In the first scene that I witnessed, two horses appeared on stage, each carrying two riders, one male and one female. The horses walked through glimmering light; the scene was one of

mystery, of intrigue. The female riders left their horses, to be led midair by their male companions; the women floated along side of the horses, as if they were angels or fairies.

The setting that Cavalía was held in was a big top which contains a massive area where the horses at times have free roam. The floors seemed to be dirt, rain and leaves fell on. The powerful music was delivered by a live arrangement of musicians, whose silhouettes could be seen faintly behind a curtain above the stage.

I gazed at the spectacle before me and the lights dimmed; a pale blue image of a giant horse appeared through the mist. A moment later, at opposite ends of the arena, two white horses emerged — each carrying a woman, also dressed in white garments. They looked as if they were either warriors or princesses, perhaps elves from Tolkien's, "Lord of the Rings." The riders strode in and out of the light as if searching for something and then through a hidden door at the rear of the stage, they vanished as quickly and as silently as they appeared.

The lights grew brighter and out of the rear door, two men appeared, carrying a wooden beam. The men conversed back and forth in an unknown tongue as a woman appeared, standing

on the backs of two separate horses. The horses ran in unison so that the woman is able to hold steady. She held the reigns of two other horses and they gallop around the arena. The men with the pillar scurry into the center of the dirt floor and held the beam horizontally, as if making a fence to block the woman with the four horses. Her mighty steeds approached the barricade and opposed to halting abruptly, to the unbelievable surprise of the spectators and myself, all of the horses jumped over the beam.

Cavalía was not what I expected at all from a so-called "ballet with horses;" it was something else altogether. The performance consisted of acrobatics, equestrian feats and many special effects as well; the visuals were magnificent, seeming to be taken from a fantastical medieval time. The bond that the riders seemed to share with their horses was beyond imagination, to witness the performance was a great treat indeed. Throughout the show, I, along with the rest of the spectators, was unable to keep myself from cheering; every scene of the performance was greater than the last, every moment building in excitement, up until the magnificent finale, which included performers doing stunts atop their horses running at a full gallop. Some performers rode backwards,

standing up, even jumping on and off of the horses, while only holding onto the reigns.

When the show ended, after an all-too-short 45 minutes (they only allowed the media to see the abridged edition of the show), I packed away my camera and notepad and searched warily in the darkness for my coat. Once found, I stumbled my way down the steps from the seat I had found earlier, still in a state of wonderment from the performance and headed back down the dark corridor from where I had come. Without a guide this time, exiting the big top through the way I had entered was a bit more of a challenge. The air in the passage was just as menacing as before, as if a chemical was being pumped into it from a sinister being in a hidden position. Though the hall was dark and acrid, I was able to find my way out, again passing the woman in black garb. I tipped my hat to her and spoke a word of thanks and made my way out.

Looking back on the performance of Cavalía, it seems to be more of a dream than a show that I had witnessed, one in fact that I would love to have again, if only to see once more a woman standing atop two horses reigning another two horses in front of her and jumping all four over a fence.

Truck falls victim to student stress for nursing program fundraiser



Photos by Hillary Cole *The Clackamas Print*

Kyle Bradbury (left) and Sarah Kuehl (right) take out stress from upcoming finals by smashing a truck at the nursing program's fundraiser on Monday Nov. 21.