A Midsummer Night’s Dream

One of Albany Berkshire Ballet’s most celebrated productions returns for a 2019 tour, reinvented with new choreography by Paula Weber. In this magical two-act ballet telling of Shakespeare’s beloved comedy, Queen Titania and King Oberon rule over the fairies and toy with the lives of mortals as they manipulate mismatched human lovers in ecstatic dance.

With enchanting music by Felix Mendelssohn and stunning original set art by Thurston Munson, A Midsummer Night’s Dream is sure to delight all ages and experience levels.

The Revival of Full Length Ballets, Year-Round

This staging of Midsummer represents a turning point in the history of Albany Berkshire Ballet. Since the 1970s, the company has collaborated with incredible talents both local and worldwide in performing stunning full length productions such as Coppelia, Romeo & Juliet, Carmina Burana, The Firebird, and many others. Following the economic downturn of 2008 and beyond, the company was forced to curtail plans for a 2009 production of this ballet. While ABB has continued to delight audiences in cities around the northeast with its annual Nutcracker, along with promoting new repertory of dance from leading choreographers, it has had a limited capacity to provide a greater variety of full length ballet productions to the communities it serves throughout the year. Addressing this identified need in the region is an important part of ABB’s company priorities as we move forward in our triumphant 50th anniversary year.

Your support will assure a thriving future for full length ballet productions to delight residents and attract visitors to this beautiful area in the years to come.

Paula Weber is Professor of Ballet and Chair of Dance in the Conservatory of Music and Dance, University of Missouri- Kansas City. She has performed solo and principal roles of more than 45 major works for companies such as Milwaukee Ballet, Chicago Ballet, Indianapolis Ballet Theatre, and Albany Berkshire Ballet (including our first 1987 production of Midsummer), and her choreography has been performed by dozens of major ballet companies throughout the United States. She has been a guest instructor of ballet throughout the U.S. and internationally.
“The Albany Berkshire Ballet can be counted on for impressively crisp, clear classical technique and fresh performing” - The New York Times

Ballet: Berkshire Group
In ‘Midsummer Night’

By JENNIFER DUNNING
Special to The New York Times

PITTSFIELD, Mass., Aug. 14 — The Berkshire Ballet can be counted on for impressively crisp, clear classical technique and fresh performing. In “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” presented by the company on Thursday afternoon at the Koussevitzky Arts Center of the Berkshire Community College, the choreographer Daryl Gray has given these engaging young dancers a chance not only to make good use of their technical resources but to weave a charming summer spell.

Mr. Gray tells Shakespeare’s comic tale of love with clarity and compellingly gentle humor. He introduces the story’s themes and characters seamlessly, in staging filled with inventive dramatic detail. In the first act, for instance, Puck munctches on a green apple, watched by a glum-eyed painted boulder, and Oberon’s little attendant elves leapfrog about the stage.

Their presence is as jarring as the breaks that follow in the taped performance of the Mendelssohn score. The Berkshire Ballet was founded in 1980 by Madeline Cantarella Culpo, its present director and a Juilliard-trained ballet teacher in the Pittsfield area, where the company is based. And the dancers have the look of products of a long-term perspective, from the women’s pristine footwork to the naturalness and professional discipline of the little elves — students from Mrs. Culpo’s school.

Deirdre Duffin was a gracious young Titania. Her looks are a little Junior League for a wild creature of the woods, but the lovely arch of her feet bore the message of Titania’s impetuosity, giving her the look of moving before a wind in the pas de deux with Bottom. Troy Hoggart was a regal Oberon, though his dancing was a little tight, and he and Ms. Duffin sailed through the daredevil partnering of their last pas de deux with startling aplomb. Jeremy Lemme was an early simian Puck, in a casually intense performance that nearly...

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