



West Town High School captures state title in dramatic fashion with 21-14 win over Bellebrook.

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A tribute to ballet dancers in a modern form



Female dancers perform the second act of Swan Lake

Steven Jones

By LEONARD EUREKA

In his six years with Texas Ballet Theater, artistic director Ben Stevenson has led the company back from the abyss. Before he arrived, TBT was broke, leaderless, and with dwindling audiences. But he quickly rallied regional support and played his trump cards gathered over 25 years, several glittering productions that he created for the Houston Ballet while artistic director there.

In addition to the classics, such as Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, and The Nutcracker, Stevenson also put on his versions of Peer Gynt, Cleopatra, and Dracula, simultaneously revitalizing TBT's repertory and drawing new fans.

His ace of trumps was a corps of bright young dancers from Houston's Ben Stevenson Academy, who followed him here and joined the company. They brought new life and panache to performances and a unified look to productions.

To celebrate these dancers, Stevenson put together an unusual program in Dallas last weekend that segregated

the sexes and allowed them to shine separately.

The opening section offered the second act of Swan Lake, essentially an all-female scene, followed by the Flower Festival pas de deux by Danish choreographer August Bournonville. After intermission came the world premiere of Stevenson's extraordinary setting of the Mozart Requiem, for an all-male corps.

On hearing the word "requiem," some people might think solemn, heavy, and mournful, a bummer. But the Mozart music is alive. Grieving moments give way to joy, affirmation, majesty, even frenzy, especially in the headlong flight of the Dies Irae, "Day of Judgment, Day of Wrath." Stevenson captured the moods of the 14 sections in unexpected dance combinations, ignoring the text for the most part and just exploring the music. The piece opened on a bare stage; the peeling wall of the Majestic Theater the only backdrop. Ten men dressed in close-fitting trousers, crewneck t-shirts, and dangling dog tags were clustered in the center, each with an arm raised, facing one another and staring up into a brilliant light. Slowly they dispersed to face the audience. The first soulful notes of the mass began, and the dancers lifted their arms.

There's a strong military flavor to the ballet — a tribute to our war dead? No program notes explained. One would have expected the full corps

to continue into the Kyrie, the glorious fugue that follows, but Lucas Priolo and Justin Urso danced alone. When the same music returned at the end of the requiem, the full complement did participate in a rousing finale. Again, the Dies Irae, which follows the Kyrie, cries out for a stage full of dancers, but Stevenson used only one, Peter Zwiefel, with great effect.

In classical ballet, men support the ballerinas and stand out mostly in brief bravura solos. Their lyric, expressive potential is rarely on view. Stevenson made use of these possibilities with a combination of modern and classical movements that gave us muscle and grace. Dancers slid across the stage on their stomachs, spun on their back-sides, fell on their faces, as well as jumping and turning in traditional style.

Andre Silva, known for his technical strength, danced the gentle Benedictus eloquently and introspectively, showing a new side to his talent. The aristocratic Priolo performed the sorrowful Lacrymosa with tearful anguish, and the husky Michael Clark took on the militant, march-like Rex Tremendae.

In one of the ballet's magical moments, Alexander Kotelenets bounded on stage and into an ecstatic leap, arms stretched to the heavens, as the chorus and orchestra boomed out the opening Sanctus. descended.

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Mark Ephrom photo

Terrence McSwain is consoled during ceremonies outside Blake Lamb Funeral Home for police officer William Grant, 44.

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Steven Jones Alexander Kotelenets leaps in the opening of Mozart's

Fire destroys Columbia apartment building



Anna Brown photo

Firefighters attempt to douse flames that burst through a hold in the apartment building's roof

By SARA SEMELKA

A fire last night at Ashwood Apartments east of the University of Missouri-Columbia caused more than \$1 million in damage and sent two firefight-

ers to the hospital with minor burns. The fire was reported at 6:09 p.m. in building 9 of the apartment complex at 1021 Ashland Road. It destroyed eight units and displaced 20 occupants, none of whom reported injuries, according to the

Columbia Fire Department. The fire caused about \$1.2 million in damage to the building and an estimated \$100,000 to \$200,000 in other property, investigators estimated. A cause has not been determined. The first officer on the scene reported smoke from the second floor, and within two minutes the fire had burned through the roof and the entire second floor was burning.

"We had flames coming from the roof in a very short amount of time," said Steve Sapp, battalion chief with the Columbia Fire Department.

Flames poured out from a hole in the roof and curled around the eaves from underneath, as well. At least 100 bystanders, many of them residents of nearby apartment complexes, stood across the ravine from the Ashwood Apartments to watch the blaze, gasping as large pieces of flaming debris fell from the roof into the shrubs below.

The Columbia Fire Department asked the Boone County Fire Protection District for assistance at about 6:18 p.m. to help keep embers falling into the woods behind the building under control.

Victoria Spradling, an MU graduate student, said she lived in one of the apartments below where she thought the fire had started.

A man knocked on the door of her apartment, which she shared with her sister, and warned her that a fire had broken out. Spradling said she heard it was a grease fire that started in the kitchen in a unit above hers.

"Within 30 seconds, we knew we had to get out," Spradling said. "I grabbed some stuff and ran out. I'm pretty sure my apartment is burned down."

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Ex-Mafia Hitman 'Sammy the Bull' Arrested in Ecstasy Ring Drug Bust



Jeff Schneider photo

Sammy the Bull Gravano was arrested in Phoenix on drug charges

Pet food recall expands to include Natural Balance dry dog and cat food

By Cris Bergman

Natural Balance Pet Foods recalled two kinds of pet food after receiving reports of animals vomiting and experiencing kidney problems, the Food and Drug Administration said Monday. At least six pet food companies have now recalled products made with imported Chinese wheat gluten tainted with the chemical. The recall involved about 1 percent of the U.S. pet food supply.

According to the Associated Press, the recall includes all date codes of Venison & Brown Rice Dry Dog Food and Venison & Green Pea Dry Cat Food. The company does not know the cause of the problem, but said it is focused on one particular lot.



Pat King photo

Natural Balance Pet Foods Now Included

The company has posted this message on its website: We are receiving consumer complaints regarding the Venison & Brown Rice Dry Dog Food, and Venison & Green Pea Dry Cat Foods. We do not know what is wrong with the food at this time, but we have heard that animals are vomiting and experiencing kidney problems. Although the problems seem to be focused on one particular lot, as a precautionary measure, we are pulling all dates of Venison & Brown Rice Dry Dog Food and Venison & Green Pea Dry Cat Food from the shelves.

Please discontinue feeding all Venison and Brown Rice Dry Dog Food, and Venison and Green Pea Dry Cat Food.

Natural Balance Pet Foods is working with the FDA to investigate the matter.