

## Neglia marks 10 years with best show of decade



**Neglia Ballet Artists**  
**Flickinger Performing Arts Center at Nichols School**  
**Buffalo, NY**  
**May 9, 2009**  
**Reviewed by Steve Sucato**

If you didn't happen to be among those in attendance Saturday night in the Flickinger Performing Arts Center at Nichols School for Neglia Ballet Artists' 10th Anniversary Gala production, you can begin kicking yourself now.

Yes, it was that good.

The production — jam-packed with ballet classics and quality contemporary dance works performed primarily by guest dancers from Colorado Ballet and Festival Ballet of Providence — was arguably the finest mounted by a local dance organization in the past decade, and easily one of the finest to appear in Buffalo this season.

In the first of two pas de deux danced by NBA principal dancers Sergio Neglia and Sherri Campagni that bookended the program, the veteran pair lent their romantic style of ballet movement to the white swan pas de deux from the ballet *Swan Lake*. Campagni's fluttering arms, dancing fingers and steady bourrée steps (rapid small steps en pointe) gave the sense of a bird skimming the water while taking flight.

Complementing her graceful movement was Neglia's impassioned machismo sturdily partnering her throughout the delicate and tempered pace of the pas de deux. The pair's

refined line and masterful dancing set the tone for the remainder of the program.

Halt's buoyant "Vivaldi No. 9" followed with a trio of dancers led by Erin Ginn - who appeared slightly off her game - breezing through the classical work that was lilting and pleasing.

In his "Sonata for Cello & Piano in E Minor" set to music by Johannes Brahms, Colorado Ballet dancer Andrew Skeels showed he is as promising a choreographer as he is a dancer. The contemporary ballet work danced by Skeels and fellow Colorado Ballet dancers Dana Benton and Emily Bromberg blended slow moving dance phrases with rounded arms and shoulders with spurts of quick traveling movements that were punctuated by a dancer stopping to stand still and erect staring intently off into the distance.

The first half of the program concluded with the "Grande Pas de Deux" from the ballet *Sleeping Beauty* beautifully performed by Festival Ballet of Providence principal dancers Mindaugas Bauzys and Vilia Putrius. The regal pair powered through the pas de deux effectively and cleanly.

While the first half of the program featured mostly classical ballet works, its second half was dominated by contemporary dance works. Following Mario Galizzi's masterful and ravishing classical pas de deux "Adagietto" to the music of Gustav Mahler and danced impeccably by Benton and Skeels, was another of Skeels' works, "Excerpts From *Shrouded Stories*."

The contemporary dance solo inspired by the Iraq War and danced energetically by Bromberg, evoked feelings of inner struggle and turmoil born out in a whirl of Bromberg's free-flowing hair in rapid spins in a circle, and the agitated flails of her arms.

Rounding out the program were choreographer James Graber's rock 'n' roll duet "Chimera," danced by him and Mary Beth Hansohn. The pair motored along with the ever increasing pace of the work's guitar-driven score to a fervent crescendo of bold partnering sequences and fiery dance steps; Viktor Plotnikov's brilliant contemporary dance work "Breathe in A," set to music by Bach. The trendy contemporary dance work performed by Bauzys and Putrius featured off-balance partnering that teetered on daring mixed with a creative use of pedestrian arm movements that together was inspired and highly engaging; and Neglia and Campagni in their signature pas de deux from Neglia's ballet *Spartacus*. The pair's emotional performance was a fitting end to a program where nearly every performance and dance work was spectacular.

*This review appeared in a shortened version May 11, 2009 in The Buffalo News.*

*For more information on Neglia Ballet Artists visit [www.negliaballet.org](http://www.negliaballet.org)*