

Toad the Wet Sprocket Band brings 'fear' to Texas A&M

By JENNY MAGEE

Reviewer of THE BATTALION

Todd Nichols, a guitarist for Toad the Wet Sprocket, said he recalls the band playing in College Station in a pizza parlor packed with about 50 people. Tonight Toad the Wet Sprocket returns for a live performance in DeWare Fieldhouse.

The band, brought to Texas A&M by Town Hall, is probably most commonly recognized for their Top 40 hit "Walk on the Ocean." However, the band's name (which was taken from a Monty Python skit) also attracts a certain degree of attention.

"I think the band's name shows you where we were when we formed the band," Nichols said. "I don't think we would have named the band Toad the Wet Sprocket if we had had any real aspirations of succeeding."

Nichols was reluctant to classify the band's music into any specific category.

"It is rock; it is pop; it is folk; we just do what we do," he said.

In 1985 four young musicians from Santa Barbara came together to form Toad the Wet Sprocket. The lineup consists of Dean Dinning on bass/keyboards/vocals, Randy Guss on drums, Nichols on guitar/vocals, and Glen Phillips on vocals/guitar/mandolin.

Their entrance into the music world began with their self-produced album "Bread And Circus" in 1989 and the follow-up album "Pale" in 1990.

Nichols said the music on "fear", the band's most recent release, is different from the first two albums because this is the first time that the band has used the studio as an instrument in the recording process. "Bread And Circus" and "Pale" were recorded live at a friend's studio.

Nichols said Phillips is responsible for the lyrics but declined to comment on where the band gets inspirations for the music that they produce.

"It is a secret," he said. "But, we want people to interpret our music the way they want to; they can even misinterpret it if they want to."

The members of Toad the Wet Sprocket have ongoing aspirations for the immediate future. Nichols said, as his voice betrayed a tinge of content-



Toad the Wet Sprocket plays at DeWare Fieldhouse tonight. The Gin Blossoms will open.

ed exhaustion, that the band is going home after 14 to 15 months on the road. However, plans for a trip to Europe in February and work on a new album are in the band's extended agenda.

Nichols said the band hopes to see the new album about out by late summer. While they are performing three new songs in their live show, the album-to-be is still in the idea stage of development.

He said that the band has played at a lot of universities prior to tomorrow's concert in Deware Fieldhouse.

"Playing at a college can sometimes be a real drag," Nichols said. "A lot of the time you get a lot of people at the show who are only there because it is the cool thing to do that night."

Tickets for the concert are \$10 for students and \$13 for the public. The Gin Blossoms will be opening.

Baryshnikov, Tharp dazzle crowd with dancing and choreography

By ANAS BEN-MUSA and
JULIE POLSTON

Reviewer and Feature Writer of THE BATTALION

Twyla Tharp, Mikhail Baryshnikov and a marvelous troupe of dancers performed a dazzling display of intricate and interpretative dance Tuesday night at Rudder Auditorium.

The production, "Cutting Up," was not the traditional or classical repertoire. Instead of extravagant costumes and immense set designs, the performance was a casual, laid-back interpretation of various eras of music.

Tharp choreographed the entire production, demonstrating her ability to coordinate a variety of dance styles. She utilized Baryshnikov's classical form in a very contemporary performance.

Baryshnikov was never confined to a certain technique; he was able to blend his traditional ballet techniques with modern dance.

In addition, "Cutting Up" showed the contrasting styles of the two famous dancers.

Baryshnikov floated through the air with graceful leaps and beautiful poses revealing his training in classical dance. Baryshnikov's background in ballet is displayed by his elegant posture and presence. Even the most basic dance steps were impressive.

On the other hand, Tharp was whimsical and carefree, re-



Mikhail Baryshnikov, along with Twyla Tharp danced at Texas A&M Tuesday and Wednesday.

vealing her contemporary style.

At times when she danced with Baryshnikov, the same dance took on a new meaning. Both dancers had the same basic steps and rhythm, but interpreted the routine differently.

The second act, "Bare Bones," exhibited Tharp and Baryshnikov's contrasting styles in a refreshingly comical routine set to selected works by Pergolesi. It was like looking at backstage antics between two good friends.

Throughout the act, Tharp and Baryshnikov were playfully challenging each other. Tharp would dance a few steps and then Baryshnikov would try to outdo her. But, it was never a

serious or tense duel.

For example, at one point while Tharp was dancing, Baryshnikov stopped dancing to tie his shoes and readjust his clothes.

Tharp and Baryshnikov were not concerned with impressing the audience with grandiose routines. They created an atmosphere for the audience to relax and enjoy the act.

Like a piece of modern art, "Cutting Up" was individualistic in nature. Each performer, including the dance troupe, contributed their own unique style to the performance.

The dance troupe wore brightly colored costumes reflecting a variety of dance styles. Pairing up, the dancers jitterbugged, waltzed and tangoed simultaneously into an explosive finale.

The finale, "Morton's L.A.-1992," demonstrated the vast talent of the entire dance company. Switching from ragtime to modern movements, the dance troupe exhibited the evolution of social dancing during this century.

Tharp, Baryshnikov and the company danced a breathless performance. The audience was left standing in ovation for ten minutes. It was not a serious or deeply emotional production, but rather a light hearted and exhilarating look at two great performers in their element—creating and developing a new understanding of dance for the audience to enjoy.



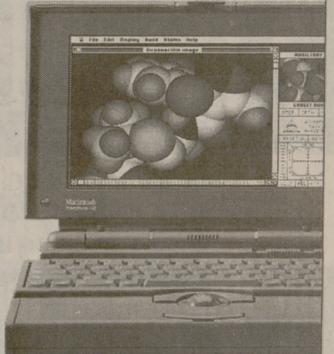
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