

Pavlova celebration kicks off Inaugural week

BY KAREN DRYBRED

Delicate hands, flowing robes, and pastel colors illuminated the stage, as the legend of Anna Pavlova was recreated in a social ballet performance last Monday night at Lyte Auditorium.

The 1981 Pavlova Celebration, marks the famous early 20th century ballerina, Anna Pavlova. Monday's performance recreated an evening of ballets originally performed by Pavlova and her company in the early years of this century.

The Pavlova style of ballet is a unique blend of choreography, extensive use of graceful hand gestures, and original design of long, flowing costumes which replaced the traditional short costumes of that time.

Starr Danias was the lead ballerina in last Monday's performance. Danias, one of Pavlova's foremost interpreters, led the company as the featured artist with all the grace and delicacy of Pavlova herself. Danias was carefully prepared for her roles with the help of Muriel Stuart and Ruth Page, two former members of Pavlova's company.

Danias, principle ballerina for the Joffrey Ballet, is also leading soloist with London's Festival Ballet and

New York's American Ballet Theatre.

Danias is known to ballet audiences as well as general audiences through her appearances in various forms of the media. She co-starred in the recent film, "The Turning Point" with Mikail Barishnikov, and has appeared on television in the T.V. series, The Love Boat, and on The Phil Donahue Show. Danias was also the first dancer to appear in the nationally televised Academy Awards ceremony from Hollywood.

Gregory King, formerly a dancer for the National Ballet of Canada, The Joffrey Ballet, and the Jose Greco Dance Company, powerfully partnered Danias in several of the Pavlova divertissements.

The company consisted of nine dancers, who recognized a former Lancaster County ballerina, Abra Rudisill. Abra had formerly studied with Chet Zercher of Lancaster, owner and chief instructor at Dancer's Workshop.

The performance started off with the entire company onstage in the first divertissement, Les Preludes. Danias and King intertwined to perform a touching duo amidst delicate hand movements and swaying skirts.

The next piece was an energetic

but brief duet preformed by two of the female company dancers. Idylle depicted two young girls battling over a flower. The dancers used a variety of humorous facial expressions, which lent a light feeling to the choreography.

In Pas de Trois, Abra Rudisill appeared as a doll in a flouncy pink dress, and was accompanied by two clowns who constantly vied for her attention. The clown's antics combined with Rudisill's expressions gave the piece an overall amusing tone.

One of Anna Pavlova's most famous pieces, The Dying Swan, was superbly performed by Danias, in the highlight of the evening. Danias seemed to take on the characteristics of a dying swan as she expressed quick, almost painful movements. Her costume was the only robe that utilized the short, French tutu of Pavlova's time, but was elegantly created to depict a swan.

Moment Musicale was a short divertissement which featured a trio of dancers bathed in soft lights and attired in gowns of a misty rose, who adopted many of the Pavlovian techniques within the piece.

The end of the first part of the

evening's performance concluded with passionate embraces and free, child-like movements. Danias and King, shedding their previous classical steps along with Danias's toe shoes, danced energetically and enthusiastically in the divertissement, Autumn Bacchanale. The piece portrayed two adolescents in love. The quick, bold lines of the dancers symbolized the joy of young love.

After a brief intermission, the entire second act of the piece, Giselle, was performed by the company. With the stage encircled by a foggy mist, the story of Giselle unfolded. The divertissement opened with a dancer depicting the misery of Giselle's lover at her death, mourning at her tombstone. King, through his powerful dancing and heart breaking facial expressions, created a beautiful portrayal of a grief-stricken boyfriend.

Long flowing robes flew past him, as the fairies of the forest began to

execute their steps. Upon seeing the distraught lover at Giselle's gravesite, the head fairy decides to allow the lovers to share a few moments together. As if by magic, Danias appeared as an angelic face from the heart of the mist. The two lovers then proceeded to dance a beautiful Pas de Deux with in the solitude of the forest. The drama ends as Giselle is beckoned back to the grave and finally must leave her grieving lover.

The evening concluded with an enthusiastic round of applause from the audience, which required the dancers to take a second bow.

According to the company's manager, the Pavlova Celebration is on tour with an extremely tight schedule up until April. He said they are touring across the United States, and also have a tour date in Venezuela, where the famous Alexandre Gudinov will be a guest performer with them for a few days.