UNH Dance Company’s “The Magic of Bugs” Opening Performance Sold Out the Johnson Theater

The first performance of the semester was very successful for the dance company, selling out completely on opening night.
The lights turned off and the audience fell silent; the sound of tap shoes filled the theater. Instrumental music followed as the dancers filled the stage showcasing their diverse talents. Each performer exuded confidence and passion which drew the audience into the mesmerizing world of rhythm, expression and bugs.

The University of New Hampshire's (UNH) Dance Company put on their first performance of the spring semester on Thursday Feb. 22. “The Magic of Bugs” featured a multitude of different genres of dance including jazz, tap, modern and aerial. Directed and choreographed by Gay Nardone and Mary Marino, students and families sold out the Johnson Theater to watch the performance.

Gay Nardone has been a director and choreographer for the UNH Dance Company since 1982 and chooses the theme of the concerts each semester.

“I have been wanting to do a Bug Dance theme for a while now. I find insect movement magical. Sometimes grotesque and sometimes beautiful. I also like to draw attention to the importance of nature,” said Nardone.

Second year student Emilie Buchanan, has been dancing her whole life and has been inspired by past dance teachers who danced here at UNH, “There’s a lot of opportunities here that aligned with what I enjoy doing,” she said.

“I’m in four different pieces. The one I’m most nervous about is the Spanish Web,” Buchanan said.

The Spanish Web was executed perfectly and was a crowd favorite, receiving a standing ovation from the audience. It was a complex piece composed of a single rope holding Buchanan by her foot and spinning her around; everyone was holding their breath and you could feel the tension throughout the theater.

“I think the show itself is just really exciting, and it’s all coming together now. It’s really fun to be a part of,” said dance company member Olivia Elliot.

There were many different types of bugs featured including dragonflies, bees, worms, frogs and more. “It’s more than just dancing because I’m also acting in parts of it. It’s a show where I have characters and I’m not just doing choreography,” Elliot said.

As the show came to an end the audience roared with applause and cheers while the dancers took their final bows. The audience spilled out of the theater and into the lobby waiting for their friends, sons or daughters to come greet them after the show.

“It was really exciting to see all of my friends in the show, and it’s always exciting to see them perform on stage and see all the hard work they put into this pay off. Seeing the aerial and the Spanish Web was really incredible,” said Ainsley Mastin, a second-year Nursing major.

“The art, theater, and dance department does not get a lot of love, PCAC is struggling for sure. So, any support that we can get is always appreciated because we’re definitely overlooked,” Buchanan said.