

IN PERFORMANCE: DANCE

By Jennifer Dunning

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Eastern European Traditions With a Fresh Look Fashion Institute of Technology

Tumultuous cheers erupted at the close of a performance by the Tamburitzans on Saturday night at Haft Auditorium, a response that one might expect at a rock concert, but not at an evening of Eastern European folk dance and music. But to spend time with this young group is to fall in love with it.

The 58-year-old troupe, which consists of students on performance scholarships at Duquesne University, takes a fresh, sleek approach to the traditional. The well-staged and lavishly costumed program zips through the music and dance of 19 countries. Much of the music was played on traditional and homemade instruments. One, a curious-looking trumpet-violin, was inspired by the introduction of the gramophone to Transylvania. The strangely Celtic-sounding music was performed by Kalman Magyar Jr., who stood out for his warmth and musical versatility.

Musical highlights included the Slovenian "Gremo Na Dolenjsko," a rollicking number for button accordion and ensemble featuring Vuk Kandic; the Domra Fantasy on Two Folk Songs, a sweeping Russian orchestral number featuring Mark Spisic, and the plaintive a cappella harmonies in the Slovak Rusyn Songs, featuring Erika Morocz.

The dance was filled with quick footwork and shifting patterns. Hanging on to one another's belts, eight men high-kicked their way through the mad Romanian and Moldovan Briul Pe Opt. "Koumoushki Splyetnitsi" was a witty Moldovan dance for gossiping women. And the Ukrainian Hopak sent the men tumbling through the air in a perfect finale.

Among the standouts were Andrij Cybyk, an engaging, first-rate dancer; John Pruzin, a bass player with dancing eyebrows, and Snezana Lazich, a musician so vibrantly at ease onstage that she smiled even while playing the flute.

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