



AMBASCIATA D'ITALIA
99 Jalan U Thant, 55000 Kuala Lumpur
GPO Box 10640, 50720 Kuala Lumpur
Telephone 4565122/4565228
Telex MA 30797 ITALDI

N. 2398

18 DEC 1987

New Sunday Time

★★

NOVEMBER 8, 1987

● Peninsular Malaysia 60 Sen ● Sarawak 65 Sen ● Sabah 75 Sen

BAREFOOT DANCERS A JOY TO BEHOLD

REVIEW BY ANGELA FERNANDEZ

I DANZATORI Scalzi (The Barefoot Dancers) were so evocatively sensual during their performance at the Pan Pacific Hotel ballroom last Wednesday night, some members of the audience blushed.

Free and unfettered in the abstract world of fluid form, they came on stage scantily dressed to reveal the beauty of lithe bodies reaching and stretching into space and towards each other.

The landscape of the human body, as it went through the stages of free-form ballet bordering on the avant garde, took on new meaning as the dancers pranced, in solitude or interaction to an atavistic beat.

In the dance dubbed 'when body becomes soul', the dancers defy definition, elude comprehension but ultimately draw attention. The dancers, three men and four women, weaved their spell on the audience who watched transfixed.

This unusual modern ballet was intoxicating. Once one got used to the initial semi-raw bodies that eventually garbed as the different stages of the dance went on.

The music was a simple but striking arrangement, one solo instrument against an uncluttered exotic melody reminiscent of El Shankar and Shakti.

A surrealistic performance, like the textures of a painting, there was dance in silence and there was dance in light and darkness. Every part of the body was used to express some idea or point of view. Hands, legs and torsos, stretched and



The Italian dancers in action.

reached out with acrobatic precision to weave their abstract patterns in space, there one second and gone the next.

There was even a serpent in transparent plastic wrap wriggling, sliding, weaving, hissing across the stage. Solo performer Ricky Bonavita danced the part superbly.

The primitive led to the modern as the dancers performed discotheque manoeuvres in colourful suits and gowns and the music echoed a jazz variation on the basic heartbeat rhythm.

Later they imitated the flight of birds in a mating game using their bodies to full expression, with steps that defied gravity. A lonely classical Roman guitar was weaved into the musical mosaic to provide some of

the best music of the evening as three women and two men did their dance of love, aggression and submission.

What was presented in the beginning was used to round up the show, thereby bringing the theme — about the birth of the dancers, their stages of growth and interaction and their returning to the source — full circle.

Patrizia Cerroni, 36, choreographer of this active ballet had taken several elements from different traditions to put it together. It took her three months and eight hours of daily work with the dancers to present the concept on stage. Patrizia has absorbed ideas from the Germans and the Indians. Of the Indians she says, "I

found the spirit in the Indian culture but not the movements."

From American Merce Cunningham, she learned the pure mathematics of dance. He taught her that dance is abstract elegance devoid of emotion. But she disagreed with Cunningham, "I think that dance must be mainly emotion, so soul must dance, not just body and mind."

She encourages spontaneity of expression in her dancers. "Find yourself in it and improvise," is her advice.

Cerroni feels that much of that excellence of a performance can be attributed to audience response.

"Dancers, like all artists, receive their energy from the audience. I think they danced particularly well here (in KL) because this was the best audience they had encountered in Asia," she added.

And indeed they were well received, judging from the applause.

The Italian dancers are expected to stage a return show late next year. With this in mind, one hopes that the future organisers will be able to provide better seating arrangements. The stage at the Pan Pacific ballroom was too low to allow people at the back to have a good view. Many ended up standing to watch.

Admission, though free, was by programme invitations. Unfortunately the programmes were taken away on entry, leaving quite a few people flabbergasted and causing one to comment: "Programmes are usually given out at a performance, not taken away. Now we have nothing to refer to."