

## **Los Alamos Monitor – Sunday, 10-21-07**

### **‘Dracula’ is a dazzler**

Review by Carol A. Clark  
*Monitor Senior Reporter*

Sensational sets, lavish lighting and delightfully ominous music frame a flowing, expressive and incredibly talented cast of dancers performing “Dracula” at Duane Smith Auditorium.

The original ballet by New Mexico Dance Theater Performance Company, of Bram Stoker’s legendary 1897 novel, is back by popular demand, following last year’s highly successful debut.

Combining traditional and contemporary ballet, all movement is expressive of each character in telling the story of Count Dracula. The audience takes a journey to a castle in Transylvania and a grand ball in England as it follows the lives of those fallen under Dracula’s spell, and of those desperate to put an end to the bloodsucking vampire and his reign of terror.

The climatic boat scene at the end of the show with its flowing chiffon waves and surreal shades of sea-green and ocean-blue lighting is nothing short of spectacular as Peter Strand’s character Jonathan Harker, wooden stake in hand, pierces Dracula’s heart and the entire scene turns blood red.

The choreography of Director Susan Baker-Dillingham, who founded the company in 2004, is simply breathtaking. Her direction and story-telling skills are clearly masterful. She creates a mesmerizing performance from start to finish with her meticulous attention to detail in every scene. Through expression and movement, the dancers portray a vibrant cast of gargoyles, bats, wolf-beasts, maids, suitors, townspeople, and a handsomely distinguished doctor. They dance together in harmony, each complementing the other, their costumes exquisite.

Eli Barnes’ chilling portrayal of Count Dracula is powerfully understated and perfect. Anna Bridge is beautiful, talented and everything one could ask for in her role as Mina Harker. Larissa Fortson brings a fabulous and elegant flair to her portrayal of Lucy Westenra. Peter Strand portrays Jonathan Harker with masterful command – drawing us in and keeping us captivated. Michael Roybal is wonderful as Arthur Holmwood. Chris Jeffery is a delight in his role as Dr. John Seward. There isn’t a mediocre performance anywhere.

Every so often a ballet comes along that dazzles you. This was it for me. Bravo.

What an experience. From its powerful opening sequence to its dramatic conclusion, this is a must-see event with one chance remaining to experience it – 2 p.m. today. Tickets are available at the door.