

Life!



**SOLID TEAMWORK:** *Fives*, choreographed by the late Goh Choo San, wrapped up the show. Exuding confidence, 15 dancers in dramatic red pantsuits weaved complex patterns across the stage. PHOTO: SINGAPORE DANCE COMPANY

## Dance, baby, dance

**Exuberant show by versatile dancers marks SDT's 20th anniversary**

### » dance

**BALLET UNDER THE STARS**  
Singapore Dance Theatre  
Fort Canning Park  
Last Saturday

**Tara Tan**

**O**VER 2,000 people were packed straw mat to picnic basket on the gently sloping green of Fort Canning Park for Singapore Dance Theatre's (SDT) Ballet Under The Stars last Saturday.

To mark its 20th anniversary this year, the SDT performed 10 excerpts of landmark works, starting with the aptly-titled *Beginnings* by the late Singaporean choreographer Goh Choo San, a quartet which was presented in the ballet company's very first show in 1988.

Audiences were treated to a wide array of work – from the quirky *Stamping Ground* by Czech choreographer Jiri

Kylian, which was inspired by aboriginal culture and the pantomime-like *Schumann Impressions* by SDT's late co-founder Anthony Then, to the poetic, classical grace of British dancer and choreographer Edmund Stripe's *Five Poems*.

*Why Not?* by Filipino choreographer Paul Ocampo was a huge crowd-pleaser. Set to music by rock band Queen and featuring such tunes as *I Want To Break Free*, the piece had eight male dancers leaping and gyrating their hips while dressed in white singlets and black shiny shorts.

At the end, they ripped open their singlets to reveal sweat-drenched chests to the roar of approval from the audience.

Local choreographic work also gained many new fans that evening, with the intensely rhythmic *Living Greens* by Mohamed Noor Sarman and the dramatic *Negro Y Blanco* by Jeffrey Tan raising wolf-whistles and applause.

Dancer Xia Hai Ying was a vision, with her graceful, lithe arms and emotional performances in the duets, namely *Graham*

Lustig's *Cinderella* (*Pas De Deux*) and *Negro Y Blanco*.

The neo-classical *Fives* by Goh drew the evening to a close.

A large, red LED V-sign dominated the backdrop, with 15 dancers in blood-red pantsuits weaving complex patterns across the floorboards.

The SDT dancers delivered confident and exuberant performances.

They demonstrated, yet again, their versatility in mastering a large range of work with different choreographic styles, and in pieces like *Fives*, worked solidly as an ensemble.

But what turned that night into an unforgettable and magical one were the emotions with which the dancers carried through the pieces.

Throughout the evening, I imagined what it must have been like when each piece was performed for the first time.

Below the velvet sky burst a myriad of choreographic flavours and styles in a poignant, nostalgic and immensely enjoyable journey through the triumphs of the dance company.

» taratan@sph.com.sg