

Happy feet hail the joys of dance

Braunton's Dancing Feet Academy Of Dance took over the Queen's Theatre in Barnstaple for two nights of dazzling dance. Rosanna Rothery was there on the opening night of Celebration.

OUT they skipped in their pretty little pop socks, red tutus and ballerina-style buns. How cute they looked as they showed us their delightfully sweet routines.

We couldn't fail to be charmed by these pre-primary tots, who finding themselves on stage for the first time, responded with an unselfconscious honesty that was both touching and amusing to watch.

Parents couldn't help but break into smiles, giggles and the odd tear at the guilelessness of these adorable young

ballerinas. As always with a Dancing Feet show, a fabulous sense of joie de vivre was established from the outset: it's great to see dancers of all ages not only learning impressive body control and technique but also clearly developing a passion for dance and performing.

Nadine Morrish and her team of teachers choreographed stylish, fun routines, that didn't just thoroughly entertain the audience, but also appealed to the young dancers performing them.

Traditional ballet pieces were given a contemporary, edgy twist that made them exciting, punchy and dynamic, while contemporary and modern dance routines took us from the magical world of Harry Potter through to the glitzy nightlife of sassy show-girls. Superb costumes and stunning lighting gave each piece an impressive, professional polish.

It may have lasted a little longer than an average dance show but with 200 students taking classes, each had to be given their chance to shine. And

shine they did. How well everyone knew their routines: not a foot out of place in the rousing tap numbers, and not an ugly line in the sensual, lyrical pieces (my own favourite was the exquisite Tonight performed with flowing scarves). We were also dazzled by the senior girls' pointe work.

The school has also branched out into musical theatre and the show was an opportunity for students to showcase vocal skills and harmony work.

While everyone contributed to making Celebration such a success, special mention has to be made of dance solos by senior students and teachers who demonstrated just what can be achieved with dedication and practice.

Helen Watts' and Sarah King's Sugarplum Fusion was an innovative, exciting take on a traditional piece, Helen Watts' Natural Woman was exquisitely sensual, Gillan Hughes' That's Life made for an uplifting tap interlude while Natasha Burgess' Cheating combined a supple flow with plenty of sass. Respect to them!



All pictures by Tom Teegan

ON STAGE: Celebration by Dancing Feet.