



Daniel Harder

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Live Theater: Got To Love It

As if the love and excitement that London offered wasn't enough, the Company traveled to Nottingham and Birmingham this past week and was showered with tons of warmth, affection, and joy. Performing in both cities was a wonderful experience and we offered two very different programs to each city. In Nottingham, we performed *Suite Otis*, *In/Side*, *Dancing Spirit*, and *Revelations*. In Birmingham, we performed *Hymn*, *Anointed*, and *Revelations*. Not only did the audiences appear to enjoy the dancing, but the sounds of Otis Redding, Moby, Sean Clements, Nina Simone, and the spirituals in *Revelations* seemed to have them swaying on the edge of their seats as if they were at a rock concert. At the end of one of the performances, one dancer in particular (Mr. Michael McBride) had an entire section of 20-30 screaming girls in the palm of his hand.

It really was a treat performing in both cities. The energy that the audiences gave us was something that I used to feed and fuel my performances. Being up on that stage and knowing that the audience is just as engaged and committed as you are is an out of this world experience. Performers always talk about that feeling you get when you know that you have the audience's complete attention... there is absolutely nothing like it! The more I have the chance to perform with this great company, the more I am learning about my craft. I have the chance to investigate the art of performing, constantly reshaping, rethinking, and recreating yourself in a role and discovering what works for you and the audience. It's actually a lot of fun and one of the things I enjoy most about touring.

I actually had an interesting experience where I really had to refocus myself while onstage. I was performing one of the duets in the ballet *Suite Otis*, and I FELL! Flat out on my face! Talk about a moment that can completely take you out of your zone. I was embarrassed (especially since there were only two of us out there), but I knew that the show must go on. I had to reorganize myself, get up, and keep twirling! LOL! I am thankful for that experience though because it kept me on my toes and gave me a chance to push myself to stay committed to what I was dancing. And, hopefully that commitment made the audience forget that I had just become an oil spill moments before. :-) The beauty of live theater!

Nottingham and Birmingham also have a fabulous nightlife. Many of the dancers went out and enjoyed the festivities that each city had to offer. I didn't get the chance to make it out, but I looked out my hotel window and could see the locals having a great time into the wee hours of the morning. I did have the chance to venture out and partake in some more shopping and eat at some delicious restaurants. The Bullring and Mailbox (two malls in Birmingham) saw me quite frequently over the course of three days.

Now, it's on to the next city. Plymouth...

With any luck, I won't fall out onstage there. But then again, that's the joy of performing; those moments of uncertainty, never knowing what to expect. All we can do is prepare ourselves for the ride and go out there fully engaged and committed to the moment, so that hopefully you will keep the audience just as willing to take that ride with you.