

Teenage Irish dancers find satisfaction in unity, travel

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Two lines of high school and junior high girls crisscross the floor in a rehearsal room at the Harro East Theatre, 155 Chestnut St.

Although there is no music, the girls move in perfect time to red-haired Julie Gerwitz's cadence.

"One-two-three, one-two-three, one-two-three," Gerwitz says, leading the girls about the room in a choreographed Irish dance entitled "The Loom."

Gerwitz, a native of London, England, is here on a Sunday morning, practicing with her fellow students of the Murphy School of Irish Dance. The school's head, Edward Murphy, is in Boston with a troupe of younger students at a competition, and Gerwitz is filling in for him.

The Murphy school numbers 30 pupils, ranging from elementary school children to college students. Murphy also has schools in Syracuse and Buffalo, Gerwitz notes.

The girls are preparing for a performance on Friday, June 9. But uppermost in their minds is the upcoming Nationals Competition in Toronto, Canada, during the Fourth of July weekend.

The girls stand a good chance to fare well at the competition, having already taken first place performing "The Loom" at a competition in Cleveland, Ohio, two weekends ago. Choreographed by Murphy, "The Loom" seeks to symbolize the weaving of Irish wool through the intricate dance steps of the lines of girls.

Katie Curran, a junior at Our Lady of Mercy High School, enjoys the teamwork that goes into such complex choreography. "You can feel proud of yourself because you're a part of it," she says.

Siobhan Fee notes that she feels part of something larger than herself when she is

dancing with the team. "It's just like we all become one," says the Minerva Deland sophomore, a parishioner at St. John of Rochester in Fairport.

"It's really intricate," Fee says of "The Loom." "There's a lot of hard moves in it. When we work together, it goes well."

The students seem to prefer competing as a team, rather than as individuals, probably because Murphy designs complex dances for the group, observes Catherine Lloyd, a parishioner at St. John the Evangelist in Spencerport.

"He makes the dancing really fun," remarks the E.J. Wilson High School junior. "It's constant movement, not what a lot of other people do," Lloyd says, noting that other schools tend to create less complex routines.

Christopher Maher is just beginning to adapt to the demands of Irish dancing as espoused by the Murphy school. The McQuaid Jesuit High School sophomore joined the Murphy school a little more than a month ago, but says he is catching on.

"I was sort of surprised I liked it," Maher remarks, noting that he joined to help out the school at the Cleveland competition. Maher says that he plans to stick with dancing, encouraged by his two younger brothers and sister who have been dancing for several years.

All the students were encouraged by their families to join the school. Curran's older sisters were once Murphy school students, and Lloyd's father, an Irish native, encouraged her to take dancing up to preserve her heritage. Fee notes that her mother's friend, a former pupil, persuaded her to join.

The students acknowledge that the demanding discipline of weekly practice is made especially worthwhile by the prospect of travel. Murphy's classes have



Linda Dow Hayes/Catholic Courier

Students of the Murphy School of Irish Dance practice some of the steps they'll need when they compete in the Nationals Competition in Toronto, Canada, during the Fourth of July weekend.

traveled throughout the northeastern United States, but everyone is pinning their hopes on placing in Toronto so that the school can compete in the world competition in Ireland.

Indeed, Curran admits that she forsook another art form for Irish dancing because

of such incentives. "I used to take ballet, but now I take this just because there is more opportunity to travel," she says.

The June 9 performance will take place at 9 p.m. at St. Philip Neri School, 1772 Clifford Ave.

DeSales High School

What is the biggest problem today?

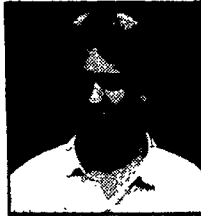
KAREN OYLER, junior:

I think that the biggest problem facing our generation today is the future. Many of us go through school not knowing what we want to do or be, so we're uncertain about things like college and careers. It's very confusing knowing that there are so many things to do and trying to find the right one to choose.



MATT TETTE, sophomore:

I feel the biggest problem in our world today is the uncaring attitude many people have. The true, caring people have been numbed by TV, radio and the media. If we want the world to improve, we must start caring again. We must care for the poor, the environment and even God.



AS TEENS SEE

PAULINE THOMPSON, freshman:

I feel that the problem in my generation is drugs. It seems day after day more kids are into drugs. Teenagers should learn how to say no to drugs.



STACIE COOK, junior:

I think the biggest problem facing today's generation is crime and cruelty — not enough people care. Everyone is concerned about themselves and no one else.



Kearney schedules soccer academy for July, August

Bishop Kearney High School will host three sessions of the Sports for You Soccer Academy in July and August.

Boys and girls ages seven to 13 can attend the program from July 5-8 from 8 a.m.-noon, or from August 14-18 from 9 a.m.-noon. A session for students at the junior- and senior-high levels will take place from 6-9 p.m. August 14-18.

The fee for all sessions is \$60 per participant. Special rates are available for those attending more than one session. A free soccer ball, T-shirt and refreshments will be available. All programs are co-educational.

Call or write: Leo Teerlinck, 5041 E. Henrietta Rd., Rochester, 14467.

High school class of 1984 plans fifth-reunion picnic

The graduating class of 1984 from Bishop Kearney High School has scheduled a five-year class reunion for Ellison Park on Sunday, July 23.

Class members wishing more information and reservations should contact Andrea Zona, 780 Laurelton Road, Rochester, 14609.

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