

The Christmas Chest Joan Ashley Reporting

As the room darkened, 175 ladies sat in awe and anticipation at the wonder of the Soli Deo Gloria Ballet presentation of 'The Christmas Chest' at Oakridge Presbyterian Church on November 21. This group of Christian dancers and musicians come from the Niagara area. This troupe was started by professional dancer Carolyn Curry and writer, singer Rachel Thomson in 2007. They have done tours and performances for churches, schools and were even at the Olympics in Vancouver. They have also appeared on 100 Huntley Street.

We had the privilege of being the first to witness the moving and inspiring presentation of 'The Christmas Chest.' With anticipation of a wonderful Ladies Evening Out program we were not disappointed. They brought to life using classical ballet, Celtic music, rousing live music performances and the stirring poetry of Keith Patman the tale of a family who rediscovered the true meaning of Christmas.

The evening began with the strong musical voice of Rachel Thompson, writer, musician and co-director which promised us that it would be a moving experience that would touch our emotions. Carolyn's dance interpretation of Mary's Song had everyone transfixed on her grateful and elegant poises. The harpist plucked on our heart strings and reminded some, of their Irish roots. The beat of the drum transformed us to another time and place as the story unfolded of one family celebrating the holidays together as they decorated a Christmas tree. The magic and mystery was captured by the lighting and fog as the contents of an old chest transported the family back to the first century and the miracle of the birth of Jesus Christ. The beautiful blend of classical ballet with requires much skill and discipline with the whimsical drum and poetry of Keith Putman was masterfully executed by all the troupe members.

Indeed our fall theme of Building K'nexions: A Place for Everyone was fulfilled this night. We were able to open our new Oakridge Hall with this presentation. Members invited friends and family members to this opportunity to 'Be still and know God'. This was an opportunity to stop before the busy Christmas season began (as the presentation was November 21st) to reflect on the reason for the season.

The silence at the end of the evening presentation attested to the God-inspired evening. The ladies gathered in the Upper Room that was decorated by the women of the church in all the splendour of the season for Christmas punch and baked goodies.