



‘Dance can tell a story words never can’

By **MARY-JUSTINE LANYON**
Editor

The intention of the Arrowhead Arts Association gala was to honor Sharon McCormick but it was McCormick herself who honored the guests with her dancers’ presentation of “Schindler’s List.”

McCormick – the heart and soul of the Lake Arrowhead Classical Ballet Company and the Lake Arrowhead School of Dance – told the gala guests she had been pondering this dance for five years.

“I had to wait for dancers young enough not to be afraid to open their hearts,” McCormick said. “I waited, watched them grow.”

The dancers had to get permission from their parents to participate in the dance, due

She asked violinist Erin Zhou if she would learn the music. Her answer? She was already working on it.

“I told the dancers that dance isn’t always pretty or classic. That costumes are not always beautiful. They all said they wanted to do it.

“Dance can tell a story words never can,” McCormick said.

With that, the dancers took their places at the Lake Arrowhead Country Club, lying on the floor as Erin evoked the notes from her violin. She then joined the dancers as they performed the dance McCormick had

choreographed. They were dressed in costumes that made it clear they represented people who had been in concentration camps.

The audience collectively held its breath as they watched this powerful performance. And, at the end, they were shocked as dancer after dancer recited

the name of the person she was representing, with her year of birth and her year of death.

This performance was the most moving and meaningful one most of the audience had ever seen. It left them speechless.

Many thanks to Bryce Knight, Karlie Wetzell, Charlotte Hopper, Amelia O’Brien,



The dancers’ performance of “Schindler’s List” left the audience speechless. (Photos by Mary-Justine Lanyon)

Sage Lozano, Presleigh Gomez, Delaney Massey, Eleanor Valdez, Ivory Bundra and Erin Zhou for having the courage to take on this dance and perform it so beautifully.

The gala began with a quintet – Erin Zhou, James Phillips, Adam Merrill and Hallie Joy Thomas on violin and Emily Torres on cello – entertaining the guests with music ranging from classical to contemporary.

Following the performance of “Schindler’s List,” mistress of ceremonies Kiki Oleson opened the bidding for nine live auction items which included hotel stays, dinners, Pilates and yoga session, a custom watercolor portrait of a person or pet, a bronze statue of a ballerina foot and a secret bag of goodies – and wine. The auction raised \$5,275 for Arrowhead Arts.

McCormick interrupted the bidding on the bronze ballerina foot to explain that it was actually a cast of her foot, taken by Tony Gardner.

It was then time for “raise the paddle,” Arrowhead Arts’ version of a reverse auction. Oleson started the bidding at \$2,000 but got her first bid at \$1,000, followed by \$500, \$300, \$250 and \$100. Those paddles raised more than \$2,500.

The evening concluded with dancing to The Hodads.

Upcoming events include the Mountain Top Strings at the San Moritz Lodge on Sunday, Aug. 24 at 5:00 p.m.; and the Fall Music Festival on Sunday, Sept. 21 at 3:00 p.m. at Our Lady of the Lake church in Lake Arrowhead.

For more information on these events or to make a donation to the Arrowhead Arts Association, visit www.arrowheadarts.org.



The string quintet – Erin Zhou, James Phillips, Adam Merrill, Haillie Joy Thomas and Emily Torres – entertained the gala guests prior to dinner.

to its intense nature. McCormick took the dancers and their families to the Museum of Tolerance “so they would understand what happened to people their age.” What McCormick didn’t know was that the students were reading and discussing *The Diary of Anne Frank* in school.



Steve Valentine and Sandra Koos dance to the music of The Hodads.



Honoree Sharon McCormick hugs violinist Erin Zhou after she played “Ladies in Lavender” to honor McCormick’s dedication to dance and her dancers.