

Bowfire heats up Kirby Center

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WILKES-BARRE — Combining the artistry of dance, music and singing, the touring troupe of Bowfire transformed a typically frosty January night into a sizzling hot night of entertainment in a superb production at the F.M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts before an audience of 1,100 people.

The talented assemblage of musicians, singers and dancers presented an awesome display of bowed prowess, covering a variety of musical genres from bluegrass and country to classical and Celtic music.

The traveling unit is anchored by a solid rhythm section and accompanying keyboardist and cellist.

All players and performers demonstrated their multi-talented skills to the delight of the Kirby audience, which frequently gave them standing ovations.

The outstanding lineup of violin and fiddle virtuosos provides the musical score for an impressive presentation of pristine sound, creative choreography and a subtle but effective lighting scheme, all of which enhanced the entire production. Bowfire is a night of music, song and dance destined to please the most discerning aural palette.

Formed in June 2000 by artistic director Lenny Solomon, Bowfire actually got its start as a group of string musicians performing in a semicircle at the World's Fair in Hanover, Germany. At the time, the outfit was simply known as World on a String.

The Bowfire company is composed of virtuoso string players who are at the forefront of their respective styles, combined with equally gifted and respected backup musicians: piano/keyboards, bass, drums/percussion, guitars and cello. Fiddlers in the company are world-class step dancers and tap dancers. Solomon and Broadway-acclaimed stage director Stafford Arima are the creative forces that make Bowfire go on stage.

The troupe's subsequent performances throughout stages in the United States left audiences clamoring for more, and today their DVD sales, television specials and stage performances like the one Thursday night have spread their deserved popularity world-wide.

The unit's stage presentation is a two-hour non-stop musical excursion that takes the violin to places that never seemed possible before. Bowfire's musical menu covers so much musical territory it defies singular description.

The show is slickly produced with no flat spots. If you like jazz or rock or bluegrass or traditional folk or even all of that, then Bowfire is the show for you.

Bowfire's performance Thursday night was presented in two parts, each holding its own special magic. Whether it was musician George Gao yielding a menagerie of sounds on his instrument called a Chinese urhu or the magically choreographed tap dance routines, the amalgam of musical territory Bowfire covered was most impressive.

Bowfire is a multimedia extravaganza that unfolds before your eyes and defies description. It might have been sub-freezing outside on this Northeastern Pennsylvania winter night, but the sights and sounds inside the Kirby Center had the thermostats up high.

Bowfire is the real thing!

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