



Hart: a dynamo of grace

By Paul McKie

Staff Writer

WITH MOMENT of Light: The Dance of Evelyn Hart, film-maker Gordon Reeve takes us beyond the standard (and, with Hart, awkward) media interviews to reveal Winnipeg's prima ballerina as a troubled artist.

Reeve doesn't just show Hart talking and dancing, he uncovers the fragile, emotive wisp of a woman who suddenly becomes a dynamo of grace and power on the stage.

Insightful look

Moment of Light premiered locally at last week's Royal Winnipeg Ballet gala tribute to Hart. It will be broadcast on CKND-TV on Dec. 22 but is running for the next two week's at the National Film Board Main Street theatre.

The 50-minute film is a candid and insightful look at an artist at work. Rather than being a typical film biography examining the life and accomplishments of its subject, Moment of Light captures the artist, Hart, at a particular

Review

Moment of Light: The Dance of Evelyn Hart

- Directed by Gordon Reeve
- NFB's Cinema Main, Nov. 6-22
- General

★★★★ out of 5

moment in her career.

Aided by beautiful locations in Europe (and not so pretty Winnipeg winter scenes) and gorgeous cinematography from Susan Trow, Reeve gets more than he bargained for.

Guest dancer

A closeup look at Hart is itself fascinating enough. Principal dancer with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and guest dancer with innumerable world-class dance companies, Hart the artist is often seen but not heard by her fans.

Just seeing her in rehearsals and talking about her desire to dance would have made Moment of Light intriguing.

But Reeve has caught Hart at a pivotal moment in her career. In 1990-91, Hart was also the principal dancer with the Bayerische Staatsballet in Munich, Germany. Reeve documents Hart's prepa-

rations for a world premiere performance in Munich. But Hart is unhappy. She's fighting with the artistic director and unhappy with her own performance.

Candid interviews in Hart's dressing room reveal a teary-eyed dancer struggling with her quest for perfection. "People settle for so much less than they can," she complains.

While she is in Paris, preparing for a performance at the Paris Opera House, Hart's emotional frailty comes out again when she is late for a rehearsal with her partner.

Indeed, Hart's often shaky emotional state leaves you to believe she'll be a miserable failure on stage.

Dancer's life

But Reeve includes scenes from those performances (again, marvelously photographed by Trow) that erase the image of the weak, doubtful performer.

On stage, at least, Hart is exuberant, graceful and confident. The contrast is startling.

Reeve may not have delved into the reclusive dancer's life, but by giving us this intimate portrait of her professional side, the dancer's true self is revealed far better than any recitation of facts could accomplish.