

Young dancer toes the path to the top of ballet world

By MARIE MCGEE

The magical "turning point" in her career as a ballet dancer is still in the offing, but 23-year-old Carole Valleskey of Livonia will be ready when the moment arrives.

In the meantime, the pert, blue-eyed brunet plans to stick to reality by continuing to work hard, yet enjoy the excitement of being a member of the nationally famous Joffrey Ballet.

The New York-based Joffrey Ballet just completed a record number of seven performances with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at Ford Auditorium.

THE DETROIT appearance gave Carole a chance for a family reunion as well as somewhat of a respite from busy tour schedule that had the troupe on the road and living out of suitcases for several months.

She still had the daily hectic rehearsal schedule, but it was fun to be home again and sleep in her own room — unchanged from visit to visit — in the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Valleskey of 14758 Melvin.

She engaged in some good-natured teasing with four of her six brothers who are still at home. There was even time for some quiet moments and se-

rious talk with 14-year-old Matthew, the only brother "who takes her dancing seriously," and shares her artistic endeavors, according to Carole's mother, Peg.

THERE WAS ALSO an opportunity to see relatives and friends at a reception, hosted by her parents, following the Feb. 23 performance.

A group of 40 attended that performance which included one of Carole's favorite ballets, "Trinity." It displays the energy and vitality of the company that has been hailed by critics as "a major troupe of limitless expressive range."

Joffrey's "no name-no star" concept make dancing with the repertory company more appealing that other more structured companies, believes Carole, who studied with Detroit's Sandra Severo before going to New York on a dance scholarship after graduation from Bentley High School in 1973.

"BASICALLY WE'RE all soloists," she said. "We're dancing all the time and we're all being seen," she said.

One of the newer members of the company, Carole has set for herself the goal of joining the "higher echelon" of the 36-member troupe.

After three years with Joffrey, she described her progress as "a slow, steady climb." She also feels that her ability as an all-around dancer, who is capable of doing a quick-study in the event of another performer's sudden injury, has been in her favor.

That she is physically strong and not particularly accident-prone have also helped. That's where all the hard work of exercising — including visits to a physical therapist on her day off — has paid off, she said.

AS FOR THE movie, "The Turning Point," she chuckled at the rapid rise to fame of the young ballerina in the award-winning film.

"Believe me, it doesn't happen that fast. Otherwise it was pretty authentic," she said. Incidentally, she added, several of her former classmates at the American School of Ballet in New York were in the film.

The ballet company left Detroit for New York where it will be the supporting company for a series of special performances by world famous ballet star Rudolf Nureyev. On tap after that is a two-week tour to Israel and possibly Europe.

But most of the talk around the

Valleskey kitchen table after the Friday night performance centered on the recent Joffrey performance in Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. for the visiting Chinese delegation as well as President Carter and other high-ranking U.S. government dignitaries.

THE COMPANY performed a segment of Aaron Copland's "Rodeo," arranged for them by the famous choreographer Agnes deMille, whom Carole called "a great lady."

In addition to the ballet company,

other performers included the Harlem Globetrotters, recording star John Denver and film star Shirley MacLaine.

"Besides being a lot of fun, it was the most thrilling thing that has ever happened to me," the young ballerina said. After the show all the entertainers had an opportunity to shake hands with the visiting dignitaries as well as President and Mrs. Carter and daughter Amy.

IT ALSO PROVIDED an amusing anecdote.

Just as she was ready to shake the president's hand, Carole said, a Harlem Globetrotter unintentionally elbowed her out of position.

"I just cut right back in front of him and stuck out my hand for the president to shake," she said.

Now can't you just hear Matthew telling all his junior high friends how his sister — who stands a mere 5-feet-4-inches in ballet slippers — boxed out a guy like Curley Neal in front of the president of the U.S.?

Merchants try Sunday hours

By KATIE KERWIN

Three Somerset Mall merchants have agreed to open on Sundays, stopping threatened evictions by the mall's owner.

The stores had filed suit last week in Oakland County Circuit Court against Billmore Development Co. protesting the unfairness of forced Sunday hours. Billmore had issued eviction notices to three stores that had refused to open.

"My clients are going to open on Sundays," said attorney Norman Lippitt. The stores have not dropped their suit, but will open by March 16, he said, for a "test period." Lippitt represents owners of Mackenzie's sportswear, Mackenzie's Polo shop, Gulan's jewelry store, and Choccolissimo candy store.

The stores have charged Billmore with breach of contract, retaliatory eviction, and restraint of trade, in addition to contending the unprofitability of Sunday hours.

"WE DECIDED DISCRETION was the better part of valor," Lippitt said. "We didn't want to jeopardize tenancy."

Two of the stores might have faced eviction for refusing to open Sundays in violation of their leases, a risk Lippitt said he didn't want to take. "We will continue the lawsuit to test the validity of the lease, though," he added.

The temporary settlement was reached in court Wednesday. "The landlord has agreed not to pursue eviction proceedings for a short period of time," Lippitt said.

The evictions will be dropped because of the tenant's decision to comply with the lease, said Henry Velleman, a spokesman for the owner. The disident merchants agreed to start opening on Sundays and "are going to continue opening," Velleman said.

"We are monitoring business activity," he added, to determine if the extended hours are profitable. "If by the end of the year, we determine they have not been," Velleman said, the policy might be reconsidered.

Velleman called the stores' lawsuit charges "ridiculous." Eviction notices were sent to the three businesses, he said, because they were the only ones who refused to extend hours.

"Others had agreed to open," he said. "We've been very reasonable about allowing them time to get ready." Selection of the stores to get eviction warnings was not a matter of singling them out for retaliation, he said. "They simply said they weren't going to open."

Lippitt said the trial Sunday openings will give the businesses a chance to test Sunday profits and gather data about sales. "We can come in with hard facts to verify our suspicion," he said, planning evidence for the upcoming lawsuit.

"We are going to pursue it (the lawsuit) diligently," Lippitt said. He added that he expected the test period to last only "a short time."

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