

# The Valley VIEW

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tugs at  
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## Young dancers bring gentle steps to Valley

by Katherine G. Bond  
*Special to the Valley View*

DUVALL—Never have I openly cried at a dance performance. Until now. After days of processing the Littleton violence, the April 25th performance by Kaleidoscope caught me by surprise.

Presented at Cedarcrest High School as part of Duvall Arts Commission's "Arts Onstage," Kaleidoscope's dancers are aged 7-14. They

drew the audience in with a vibrant program including numbers such as the whimsical "Munch, Glunk, Yum" (my kids' favorite), a dance of dinosaurs made all the more wonderful by dancer Jeff Eaton's quirky facial expressions.

"Night Terrors," choreographed by director Anne Green Gilbert and the dancers, brought us back to a child-world peopled with monsters, where blanket-wielding sleepers conquer their fears.

Another treat was "Una Belle Dance," with its stunning multilevel choreography by high school senior Danielle Payton. Gilbert's philosophy that young people are able to achieve a professional level of artistic expression has brought Kaleidoscope into the international spotlight.

These students are professional in every sense of the

word.

The company's showcase piece is the moving "Tribute to Stephen Biko," in memory of the slain South African activist. Choreographed by former company members Ming Gale and Melanie Kanna, the unfolding story held the audience at rapt attention.

But the dance that left me weeping was "Oh, Be Gentle." Anne Green Gilbert combined American Sign Language with movement to offer a plea for gentleness toward all living things.

As the children moved downstage to the words "Have you been wounded?," some carrying others in their arms, I sat with my son in my lap and felt the tears come. I let them. All week I had been asking, "Why?" But the children, their graceful motions, their faces full of feeling,

tapped into a sorrow I had not yet expressed. This is why we need the arts. They have the power to heal us in ways we cannot explain.

That's what dance-and children-are capable of doing.

In Duvall, the "Arts Onstage" season continues June 13, with Storybook Theatre's presentation of "Pinochio Commedia." Call 788-9308 to find out more. Tickets are available at Gardens and SunSpaces.