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A Letter in support of Erin Carignan's costume design for Colorado State University's Fall dance concert

Costume design for dance has its own set of challenges. Since there is not a script, designers create costumes using the music and the choreography to inform their design. The designer is charged with creating unique outfits for each dancer that give them some individuality but also are part of a larger group. Also of utmost importance is to not inhibit the choreography in any way. Seeing the four pieces that Professor Carignan designed, I was impressed with the diversity of her design choices, each very different from the other, but appropriate for the different pieces. From colorful bird inspired costumes to more traditional ballet looks to throwback hip hop styles, there was a wide variety of designs created for the four disparate styles of dance pieces. Her designs for *Flock Behavior* were colorful, and fun yet minimalistic in order to showcase the dancers' movement. The costumes each had a lot of varied coloration to show depth and texture, which is a hallmark of Professor Carignan's designs. The headpieces she designed were cleverly designed to give an avian feel without overwhelming the dancer or pulling focus.

The costumes in *The Ballet* was a vibrant take on the traditional ballet dance costume. There was a jewel box of colors displayed in all of the dresses as well as the harlequin looks of the dancers. The dresses were lovely and of a uniform style with the variety in colors chosen to compliment each other. The many layers of fabrics provided visual interest that accentuated the dancers' movements as well as added texture to the design. The masks that were passed out as part of the dance worked well and provided a visual element that added a layer of formality to the piece.

In *Shedding*, the costumes were simple and a controlled color palette that was appropriate for a large avant garde dance piece and one that called for a costume piece that was easily removable during the dance to facilitate the title of the piece.

The last set of costumes she designed was for *Pump Up the Jam*. These costumes were fun, colorful, and had a retro feel and fit. Professor Carignan utilized interesting accessories such as flip up glasses, and fanny packs that bring back memories for those of us that lived through the late 1980s .

Professor Carignan designed sixty-three costumes for this production that all worked well with the music and the choreography, were visually interesting, and added a key design element for a polished production.

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