

## NO CHALLENGE TOO GREAT FOR THESE DEDICATED ARTISTS

by Jessica York

The International Children's Festival proved an exhilarating and interesting challenge for the 10 dancers that make up *Dancin' Unlimited Jazz Dance Company*. Held at Wolf Trap Center for the Performing Arts on September 18 – 19, 2010, this jam-packed 2 day festival covered acres of land and attracted hundreds of art aficionados in a fun, family-oriented environment.

The members of *Dancin' Unlimited* were very excited to present 30 minutes of solid jazz dance repertory to such an eager audience. The program was packed with versatile and creative works, from highly physical African-based jazz to Big Band and Broadway. The dancers quickly realized, however, that for this performance to happen as planned, they would have to be creative not only as artists, but also as problem-solvers. Warming up could be tricky, because the dancers were outside, amidst the trees and uneven terrain. The recently built stage was very slippery, which the company did not anticipate. What could the cast of Minnie do to prevent slipping in heels on such a slick stage? How could the company as a unit hold the attention of an audience packed with countless kids, eager to jump up on the stage and join in with them?

With professionalism, clarity, and ease, this group of passionately committed artists clearly is up for whatever challenges are thrown at them. A less than ideal warm-up setting? No problem. Company members found a remote part of the parking lot to get their bodies centered, focused, and physically prepared to perform. Flat backs, plies, and tendus – on the concrete, to the sound score of chirping birds – no challenge is too great. An ice rink for a stage? The dancers adapted by becoming even more aware of the space, each other, and the movement, and gave a stellar performance like nothing was affecting them.

At the close of the performance, the audience of over 200 was thrilled to experience the excitement of high-quality, live jazz dance. We applaud the dancers for being dedicated to bringing their best energy forward despite the circumstances. These dancers strive to leave the audience refreshed, renewed, and inspired, and that they certainly did.