

Keeping on her toes

Redman looks beyond stage to gather her wings

By FRANK MILLER
Editor

Although Kelly Redman earns plaudits before audiences of U.S. servicemen, she seeks to gather her wings behind the controls of an F-16.

The 24-year-old former gymnast and Kilgore Rangerette dances with the Southwest Jazz Ballet Company, a Houston-based troupe that entertains at military bases.

Their performance is choreographed with patriotic and military music that resembles a variety show.



Redman

While Redman likes jazz ballet, she plans to actually enter the U.S. Air Force and learn to fly.

"When I saw the Blue Angels fly over in formation I knew that's what I wanted to do," Redman says.

A competitive gymnast for 12 years, Redman earned her bachelor's degree in modern dance from Sam Houston State University. Before that, she danced as a Kilgore Rangerette, where in a sense, she learned a military mind-set.

Out of 100 girls who audition, 30 are chosen as Rangerettes, the group which — 49 years ago — established the first dancing drill team.

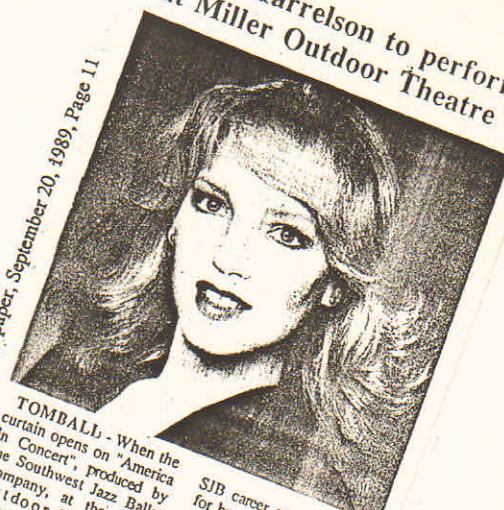
A freshman Rangerette must learn to obey, take commands and put forth a good smile. Military discipline is standard. "I still say, 'Yes, ma'am' to the telephone operator," Redman says. This Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Kelly and SBJ will celebrate a 10-year existence with free performances at Miller Outdoor Theatre at Hermann Park in Houston.

The two-hour "America in Concert" features more than 50 singers and dancers who perform medleys complete with high-kick routines, tap dancing and jazz interpretations. The dancers are not paid, but being on a stage is a payment, Redman says.

SBJ was founded by Rita Br and Jerry DeFillippo. Kelliforms in almost every musical arrangement, which requires one change artist. "I've done 20 second for a r Redman says

Another shows: flags, Tr... effect and

Vicki Harrelson to perform at Miller Outdoor Theatre



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TOMBALL - When the curtain opens on "America in Concert", produced by the Southwest Jazz Ballet Company, at the Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park, this week, a young lady from Tomball will be the featured singer in two of the numbers; "Top Hat and Puttin' on the Ritz".

SJB career as performing for hundreds of sailors on the USS Independence last fall. "After seeing first hand what the military personnel endure to protect our freedom, it makes me feel great to make my small contribution," Vicki said.

Vicki Harrelson, of Tomball, is a veteran of musical theatre, having performed national tours with two theatrical companies, as well as a U.S.O. tour. She is a featured soloist at Six Flags, a Houston Oiler's cheerleader for two years and has also appeared in several feature films and commercials.

Vicki is currently a pre-law student at the University of Houston. Special guests for this Band and the U.S. Army Silent Drill Team from Ross Sterling High School in Baytown, "America in Concert IX" is an energetic and patriotic musical variety show for the entire family and it's free.

Vicki has been a featured singer for Southwest Jazz Ballet for two years. She enjoys the community service work and the tours across the country. She recalls the highlight of her

The performances are Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Sept. 21, 22 and 23, at 8:30 p.m. For more information call 784-5560.

Local dancer finds jazz ballet good therapy

By MEDA DALTON
Contributing Writer

Cindy Frierson of Sugar Land returned to dancing and will make her debut at the Southwest Jazz Ballet's "America in Concert" Sept. 21, 22 and 23.

Actually she never planned to be a dancer. Like lots of little girls, Frierson took the basic ballet and tap lessons. She learned dance from "Mrs. Baker, who taught every child in Sugar Land who ever learned to dance."

Like so many, the ballet slippers were hung up with adolescence. Then came school at A & M, graduation from HBU, marriage and the birth of

Noel who is now 8 years old. Frierson is a real estate consultant and presently is engaged full time in managing her father's estate. She grew up at the TDC in Sugar Land, where her father was Director of Agriculture.

Donna Hull, a childhood friend who dances professionally, kept Frierson's interest in dance whetted, but it was young Noel's first dance lessons that made Frierson want to dance again.

She became a substitute dance teacher, but still didn't get to dance much because the teacher was extremely healthy.

At the end of June, a Southwest Jazz Ballet rehearsal was such toe-tapping, finger-snapping fun that she

joined the troupe on the spot. Since then she has had hours of dancing and is still enthused about the snappy dancing. Recently divorced, Frierson also finds the dancing to be good therapy in addition to just being "lots of fun."

Southwest Jazz Ballet is an "informal USO" that tours military bases and is celebrating 10 years of providing free shows for military personnel. Providing a patriotic salute to American music and dance, they are the most decorated dance team in America, receiving well over 300 awards.

The troupe is non-profit and the dancers' love of dance and stage is their only compensation. Frierson hopes to become more involved and

to begin traveling to out of town performances, "unless it interferes with a mother." Noel usually rehearsals.

"I'm trying real hard," Frierson says, describing herself as a good student. Noel is looking forward to seeing mom on the stage this weekend. They are busy putting together costumes and props.

This free star-spangled song and dance extravaganza is at 8:30 p.m. at Miller Outdoor Theatre at Hermann Park. Special guests include the U.S. Army Band and in addition to a New York medley, complete with high-kick line, there will be a tribute to George M. Cohan, choreographed with a tap dancing Uncle Sam.

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Southwest Jazz Ballet Celebrates 10th At Miller

For 10 years, Southwest Jazz Ballet has entertained over three million people in Houston and at more than 200 military bases and ships throughout the country with their rousing, patriotic celebration of American music and dance.

This energetic troupe, nicknamed the "unofficial USO" because of their dedication to the members of the Armed Forces, will celebrate their 10th birthday with three nights of free performances at Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park on Thursday-Saturday, September 21-23.

ances by the U.S. Army Band and the MCJROTC Silent Drill Team from Ross Sterling High School in Baytown.

This year's three performances will celebrate SJB's ninth annual free Miller Theatre concerts by spotlighting the "Best of Southwest Jazz Ballet."

For a spectacular evening of

dancing and music, don't miss Southwest Jazz Ballet's "America in Concert IX." The price to obtain free tickets by Miller Theatre's ticket line at Hermann Park at 11:30 a.m. of the performances is 520-3290. Or bring

chairs or a blanket and a picnic basket and enjoy the show from the hillside in front of the stage.

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