



BUGLISI DANCE THEATRE

February 8, 2013

Buglisi Dance Theatre opened their 20th anniversary celebration at the Joyce Theater. Presenting two programs containing four world premiers, company classics, and choreography by guest choreographers, this powerful company displayed the seamless technique, strength, and vitality that propels them in a world full of instability and strife.

The world premiers in Program A expressed a sense of eternal continuity in spite of inevitable anguish. "This is Forever," with music composed and performed by Steve Margoshes, was a passionate piece about eternal love that transcends death. Couples glided across the stage, the women's white dresses trailing in the air. Abandonment and passion filled the theatre, as the men tossed their partners through the air. The synthesis of music and movement created a utopia, which even the apparent deaths of the women couldn't hinder. On a joyous final piano trill, Jason Jordan threw So Young An into the air, when he caught her, smiles spread across their faces and throughout the audience. A happy ending was refreshing in a world that often expects suffering from its artists.

Similarly, the second world premier, "Snow Falling on Water," was dedicated to victims of Hurricane Sandy. It explored the question of what of ourselves remains when we experience loss. A duet, choreographed to music composed by Andy Teirstein, featured Helen Hansen French and Ari Mayzick, and choreography that followed the whipping, circular path of a hurricane.

A screen portraying violent waves intensified the reference to Hurricane Sandy. The dancers seemed to be engulfed in the chaos when the curtain rose and they sat calmly, backs to the audience, watching the image. With a different dynamic than the emotionally full, intimate, and sweeping style of the other works on the program, "Snow Falling on Water" was comprised of fleeting momentary touches and gestures, and a partnership that became more and more distant. Nonetheless, Buglisi's hopeful style ended almost where it began--the two dancers sitting side-by-side facing the screen. This time, however, the piece answered the question at hand in two different ways: French collapsed, while Mayzick seemed to float forever on the water.

The final piece on the program, "Requiem," a company classic, which was created in the context of the tragedies of 9/11, exploded with the female strength that Buglisi is known for capturing in her work. A timeless piece, it was performed by former Principal Dancers with the Martha Graham company, Terese Capucilli, Christine Dakin, and Viriginie, along with three women of the Buglisi Dance Theatre. Dressed in complex, luxuriously long and layered gowns, these five women were the epitome of feminine strength.

In its entirety, the program was emotionally full and impressively technical. Buglisi's modern background morphed seamlessly with contemporary influences. In its 20th year, Buglisi Dance Theatre moves onward.

-- Elizabeth Sherlock-Lewis

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