

## Buglisi Dance @ the Joyce|Program B

Wednesday February 6, 2013 –

This second programme of the **Buglisi Dance Theatre's** current season at **The Joyce** seemed to linger pretty much on the dark side.

**CARAVAGGIO MEETS HOPPER** is set in a shadowy bar, possibly an airport lounge. Martine van Hamel and Charles Askegard find a connection (or possibly a re-connection?) and it is truly wonderful to see these two great dancers onstage together.

...**THRESHOLD**, a 1991 duet in which the female (Virginie Victoire Mecene) emerges from a chrysalis to encounter the male of the species (Kevin Predmore). The duet is mainly floor-oriented and Ms. Mecene rides on the crawling Mr. Predmore's back, balancing herself in a standing position... The two dancers were powerful in their commitment to the piece.

A new work, **BUTTERFLIES AND DEMONS** plunges further into the crepuscular depths; it is a piece which grew out of Ms. Buglisi's personal reaction to the ongoing tragedy of human trafficking. Jack Mehler's intense lighting design accentuated a sense both of imprisonment and the (faint) possibility of escape. The dancers often rush frantically about the space, their expressions of horror or anguish registering their feeling of entrapment. In a powerful vignette, Darion Smith finds himself an outcast among outcasts, tormented and torn down. The score by Daniel Bernard Roumain underscores the drama; I would like to experience this work again for I feel it calls for a more detailed investigation than a single viewing affords. All the dancers were excellent.

The tenebrous feeling continued after the intermission but it was the kind of luminous darkness I like best: Katarzyna Skarpetowska's **ZJAWA** was given its premiere performance. Ms. Skarpetowska has in the past year created three uniquely beautiful danceworks and I've become a devotee of her work (and of her dancing as well). The two works by Kate that I already experienced were both created for **Parsons Dance: A STRAY'S LULLABYE** and **BLACK FLOWERS**. I was keen to see this newest work for Buglisi, and am pleased to report that Kate is now three for three in my book: a strikingly clear and musical voice in the choreographic choir.

For this solo, Kate drew inspiration from a Polish legend - as set forth in a classic poem by [Adam Mickiewicz](#) - about the lost underwater city of Switez. The ballad inspired a [short animated film](#) in 2011, and now - thanks to Kate - comes miraculously to us in the danceworld. It's a solo I could easily watch and savour again and again.

Nothing enhances a choreographer's work like having it danced by a goddess, and so this evening we were treated to a ravishing performance of this new solo by Carrie Ellmore-Tallitsch, a lyrical presence with a mystique all her own. In **ZJAWA** one sensed a connection to the 'mad scenes' of the great operatic heroines of the *bel canto* period. Dancing is a creamy silken shift (designed by Reid Bartelme), Carrie quite literally floated thru Kate's fantastical steps, evoking the legend of *The Lady of the Lake*. The solo opens with Carrie skimming backwards about the space, an underwater echo of Balanchine's **Sleepwalker**. Having lured us into the water nymph's world with her elusive beauty, Carrie ends the solo by drifting backwards into the murky depths.

Jacquelyn Buglisi's splendid **SUSPENDED WOMAN** (2000) ended the evening... on a high note. In this spellbinding ensemble work set to Ravel's G-major piano concerto (embellished by Daniel Bernard Roumain) a stage-full of fabulous females move in stately or somewhat maddened cadences; their costuming ranges from Southern belle to lost Wili. A quartet of men appear briefly, but this work is as much a women's world as Balanchine's **SERENADE**. It was lovely to see Carrie and Kate among the swirling ensemble as the women move forward and back in gracious curtsying motifs, with Terese Capucilli assuming a queenly aspect by virtue of her power and grace. Along with **REQUIEM**, **SUSPENDED WOMEN** struck me as Buglisi's finest work for the stage.

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