

Buglisi Dance Theatre Offers a Grand Aesthetic

By Lisa Jo Sagolla | Posted Feb. 6, 2013, 4:25 p.m.



We've heard how "everything is beautiful at the ballet." But this week Buglisi Dance Theatre, celebrating its 20th anniversary with two repertory programs at the Joyce Theater, shows how everything is also beautiful in the choreographic visions of its artistic director, Jacquelyn Buglisi, whose dances are breathtaking. ...

Her works are typically set to lush music and costumed by A. Christina Giannini, a gifted designer who always finds just the right fabric and uses lots of it to complement the full-bodied movements and enormous emotions of Buglisi's works. Built of vocabulary derived from her years performing with the Martha Graham Dance Company, Buglisi's choreography draws powerful attractiveness from Graham technique's strong, spiraling actions, initiated from deep in the torso. Buglisi's work may resemble

Graham's but without the agony and the edges. Buglisi's pieces appear born of a warmer, positive spirit, a desire to share the vast beauty of human experience. Even in "Requiem," her Program A closer, created in 2001 in the wake of Sept. 11, Buglisi conjures an inspiring sense of ongoing spiritual energy. Set to stirring choral music by Gabriel Fauré, it situates five dignified women atop pedestals. They wear long-trained backless dresses that display the choreography's eloquent upper-body twists and contractions and hang to the floor even as the women ascend, reaching to gold light shining down from above. One of Buglisi's finest works, its performance is enriched by dancer Terese Capucilli and guest artists Virginie Mécène and Christine Dakin, all former Martha Graham stars. The program opener, "Rain," is a 2004 work of ingenious visual design. Demonstrating the sumptuous kinetics of common dance movements—the dazzle of spinning, articulateness of ballet allegro steps, heaviness of falling, smoothness of circling, lightness of lifting, and propulsiveness of jumping—nine dancers, flawlessly lit by Clifton Taylor, perform behind Jacobo Borges' projected video photography of natural wetlands. Thanks to the miraculously coordinated efforts of the choreographer and designers, we see everything the dancers do while simultaneously basking in the feelings generated by images of a fresh, moist environment.

Though Buglisi has been industriously creating new pieces—each program offers two premieres... "This Is Forever," a new work about romantic love, is lovely in its development of lyrical movements for four couples rooted in waltzing but is fueled largely by composer-pianist Steve Margoshes' luscious music. "Snow Falling on Water" is set to an unusual piano, cello, and hammered-dulcimer score by Andy ... danced by Helen Hansen French and Ari Mayzick, who shines in "Prelude," a solo created by company co-founder Donlin Foreman. Completing the program is "Arenal," a Nacho Duato solo elegantly interpreted by Natasha Diamond-Walker. *Presented by Threshold Dance Projects, in association with the Joyce Theater Foundation, at the Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave., NYC. Feb. 5–10. (212) 242-0800 or www.joyce.org.*

Photo Source: Kristin Lodoen Linder

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