



## Buglisi Dance @ the Joyce|Program A

Tuesday February 5, 2013 - Celebrating their 20th anniversary, [Buglisi Dance Theatre](#) opened their season at The Joyce with the first of two program rich in music, movement, and marvelous dancers.

Ms. Buglisi's work, of which I have regrettably till now seen so little, leaped to the forefront of my imagination in 2011 when her dedication to the memory of the victims of 9/11 was manifested in her poignantly ritualistic [TABLE OF SILENCE](#) which filled the plaza at Lincoln Center with a vast company of white-clad angels on the tenth anniversary of the day that changed everything. The work was repeated in 2012.

When her Joyce season was announced, I knew I would want to see both programmes, both to witness more of Buglisi's work - alongside that of guest choreographers - and because several of the participating artists are already dear to me from other settings.

The four Buglisi works on the program might be viewed as a 'four seasons' symphony: the two new works - **SNOW FALLING ON WATER** and **THIS IS FOREVER** - representing Winter and Spring respectively; the 2004 **RAIN** for Summer, and the gorgeous benediction of the Autumnal **REQUIEM** to bring the year round full circle. Other choreographers were represented in a pair of works which formed the central segment of the evening's first half: three solos from Nacho Duato's **ARENAL**; and **PRELUDE**, created in 1997 by Donlin Foreman.

The sounds of the rainforest draw us in to **RAIN**. Performed behind a scrim on which filmed images of water dripping from leaves and branches are projected, the dancing was at times obscured by visual aspects of the production. Nonetheless, the dancers in tropical whites moved with sinuous languor to a musical collage weaving works of Glen Velez and Heitor Villa-Lobos into a tapestry of jungle voices, rushing water and timeless chant. A passage set to Mahler seemed incongruous here - though undoubtedly pleasing to dance to. Among the beautiful dancers with whom I now must familiarize myself, three who I know from other performances distinguished themselves: Lauren Jaeger, Marie Zvosec and Darion Smith. The others were already luring my eye and as the evening progressed I came to admire their work as individuals and as an ensemble.

Natasha Diamond-Walker's stately bearing and elegant posture held us entranced in the Duato solos where her mixture of dignity and allure gave provocative hints of an untold narrative as she moved to an evocative vocal score by Maria del Mar Bonet. Against a glowing orange backdrop evoking a late-summer evening, Ms. Diamond-Walker in a rather severe black frock had a tinge of *flamenco* whispering to us thru her poetic performance.

In **PRELUDE**, the exotic-looking Ari Mayzick's sculpted torso dazzled the eye as he moved thru the demands of the choreography - by turns athletic and lyrical - to a score by Gerald Finzi. An abstract work, the solo nonetheless made us feel we were watching a man with a passionate destiny. Mr. Mayzick's stage presence and absolute command of the vocabulary drew a screaming ovation from the audience which the *danseur* received with modest grace.



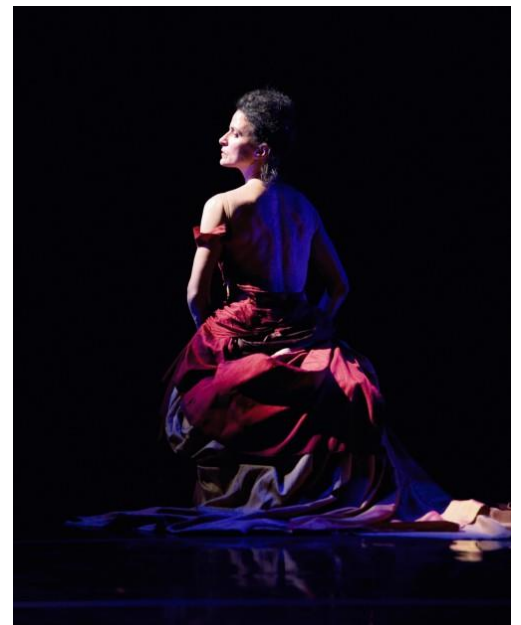
Composer Steve Margoshes was at the keyboard to play his rhapsodic score for the premiere of **THIS IS FOREVER**. In this spacious, romantic work, four white-clad couples dance in a ballroom on a late-Spring evening. The composer sets forth a variety of dance rhythms, ending with a lyrical waltz. Ecstatic lifts decorate the swirling choreography as the women's skirts drift airily on the music. The ensemble of beautiful dancers - So Young with James Jordan, Lauren Jaeger with Michael Fernandez, Stephanie van Dooren with Ari Mayzick and Grace Song with Darion Smith - gave the ballet a chimerical appeal in this engrossing work.

Following the intermission, Winter has set in as projections of melting snow and a frigid shoreline dominated the space in **SNOW FALLING ON WATER**. Dancers Helen Hansen French and Ari Mayzick watch the wintry sky together, then dance a gentle duet in which there is less a feeling of present romance than a memory of things now in the past. Musical inspiration came from a finely-crafted score by Andy Teirstein which called for the unusual instrumental blending of piano, cello and dulcimer. Pianist Katherine Tagg set the pacing with her impeccable musicality whilst cellist Greg Hesselink's playing had a soulful depth of expression. The enchanting dulcimer filagree - expert playing from Bill Ruyle - gave the score its dreamlike quality, the gentle sounds of this often under-utilized instrument evoking the fall of snowflakes. At the end, the faces of the two dancers appeared out of the the wintry sky, looming over the abandoned shore like a transient vision.

Set to the incandescent score of Gabriel Faure, Ms. Buglisi's **REQUIEM** is perhaps her most resonant and marvel-filled work. Five women, in ornamental capes, perform rituals of mourning, consolation and hope as they sway and gesture in a compelling *plastique* language. Seated or standing on low stools, they use their backs, shoulders and arms as expressive instruments, wrapping or unfurling their capes, and sometimes rushing about the space as if propelled by unseen forces. Clifton Taylor's lighting creates a gorgeously spiritual atmosphere.

For this opening night performance, a quintet of truly glorious dancers took the stage: the majestic Terese Capucilli, Helen Hansen French, and So Young were joined by the legendary Virginie Mecene and Christine Dakin. I had only seen Ms. Dakin once previously, dancing a duet with Stephen Pier; but I've never forgotten her intense and vividly physical performance. It was a great pleasure to see her again.

Tonight's performance of **REQUIEM** was truly extraordinary and ended with a lovely gesture from Ms. Dakin as she took a large bouquet of flowers and presented them to Ms. Buglisi. The curtain calls became a loving expression of mutual admiration among the six women, the audience savouring every moment.



photograph by Kristin Lodoen Linder.