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Performing Arts: Dance

JULLIARD DANCE REPERTORY

April 8, 2013

Talent, passion and energy were in seen in abundance at the Juilliard Dance Repertory at the Peter J. Sharp Theater. The program of mixed repertory was danced by 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students, and it was difficult to tell who was from what year because of the composure and professional level of dancing.

The program opened with Four Brubeck Pieces (Opus 104), choreographed by Murray Louis. Set against a striking backdrop of sharp stripes, the dance began with a Juilliard Jazz quartet: piano, drums, bass and saxophone. The dancers, wearing a variety of black and white patterned leggings, tops and shorts designed by Frank Garcia, popped onto the scene. Immediately, their focus, rhythm and motivation was noticeable. There were sassy tushies, kinetic, slicing arms, and subtle head wiggles as the company of eight made accordion-like lines. Dancers took moments to shine, whimsically weaving through each other in the softer, second section. Charming duets, full of sly humor and inventive partnering made up the third section, culminating with the ebullient "Take Five" finale. It all added up to a rousing demonstration of the love of dance, full of amazing leaps, extensions that balanced on a precipice, and bravura ballet technique.

Military men in red berets and young women in white dresses appeared in Paul Taylor's sublime Sunset. Against a speckled backdrop by Alex Katz, the men are seen waiting, by a railing. They horse around at times, their arms casually in their pockets as they lean back, hinge-ing to their knees. When the four young women enter, the dance becomes an interaction of young desire, yearning, and the need to connect. This piece gave the dancers opportunities to show some emotion and develop characters. An especially creative section where a petite woman climbed, scampered and was tossed between the men reminded one of the innocence and playfulness of youth.

One Flat Thing, Reproduced by William Forsythe brought the program to an intense close. As the aluminum tables were pulled forcefully into place the dancers maneuvered on top of, through, and under them. The various levels of the choreography resembled mechanical gears, and the music by Thom Willems was a generating force of zigs and zags as the dancers threatened to collide. It was a marvel to behold the seeming randomness as it sliced, and shimmied until the tables were breathlessly whisked away.

EYE ON THE ARTS, NY -- Deborah Wingert