



iDANZ
Sasha Deveaux
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Nicholas Andre Dance never misses a step with thoughtful choreography and beautiful movers. *Wired* (world premiere) sets the tone of the night at Joyce SoHo as Nick Ross gives his dancers six concise choreographic themes from 2007 forward. Nicholas Andre Dance is a champion at concert dance forms with beautiful movement and well-trained bodies. Precision and force are trademarks of the articulate choreography from Nick Ross.

From the *Beginning*, dancers ooze energy into the space while wearing dark-hued short unitards with lightning-inspired neon green veins running across their bodies. The chemistry and excitement are subtly contained in the dancers' opening sequence. A quartet showcases the clean lines and technical work. The women dance with a precision and unison seemingly tying the company together, while the men run the gamut of styles and diverse talents—all strong. It is interesting to see Nick Ross's contemporary choreography build on themes and variation creating a very structured development of his six stories—a choreographic tool and construct very characteristic in style and concept taught at SUNY Purchase College. This alum successfully utilizes these tools of the craft to effectively articulate his own choreographic voice in each work. The dance department at Purchase should be proud... It is noted within the footnotes that this production does not prescribe to providing any notes whatsoever in the program. This purist stance allows the audience their own interpretation and challenges them to think for themselves while reading the movement for clues.

Undercurrent (2009) is a mature-minded quartet where the dancers reverberate with an intense energy that builds and never quite peaks; however, well-handled, this work is exquisite to watch and enjoy. Kristy Engel and Trista Jennings both shine in their solo sections opening up, pulling away from the corps-styled movement and letting their hair down to feature individuality. Tommy Scrivens is riveting and caught my eye with his very masculine dancing and seasoned execution of the work. Ross shows his softer side with all the understated elegance and emotive movement that draws on imagery and allows the audience time to savor his creation.

Another world premier, *Elegy*, is set to Philip Glass' "Metamorphosis One & Two" Chris Ralph opens the work with a solo. His sculpted frame glides across the stage and embodies Ross' concepts with ease. Ralph is joined by Tommy Scrivens and Aaron Walter; this athletic trio overpowers the stage. The work drags a bit in the middle when a quartet of women performs their phrase in a very static pattern while the focus is on the men. Moreover, the ending seems unfortunately rushed. I would have liked to see more integration of the theme on the background dancers and not what looked to me as an unfinished section by the choreographer.

(iDANZ review cont.)

Passages (2009) features an intriguing tableau of dancers walking across a back panel of marley. Burke Wilmore's lighting for this work is amazing and perfectly integrated into the choreography. Twice this month I have seen him transform the white walls of Joyce SoHo with an amazing palette of colors (such as Burke's work with the Dash Ensemble I reviewed a few weeks earlier). Equally, Ross' costumes in brown hues highlight the dancers' physiques and never detract from the work. For me, Jeremy Nedd shines with great presence in this work, especially in his duet in which he is such a strong partner.

Richard Cook, a beloved ballet faculty member at Purchase (gone too soon on July 14th, 2009), is memorialized by Ross in *The Last Man* (2007), a work he dedicates to Cook. The male quartet with athletic partnering utilizes a theme of three dancers against the one to dramatic effect. The men move beautifully and feature the best dancing of the night as Ross' more contemporary style is infused with weight and more athletic contact work. From the beginning to the middle, the dancing is even amongst the men and solid in choreographic structure but staggers a bit in the end as one man is about to be left on stage alone. To counter this cliché, Ross makes the decision to leave another facing away and downstage as "the last man" is left representing loss.

The evening closes with *Until Blue* (2009) a strongly counterpointed work set against a beautiful blue cyc. Ross sets his dancers in motion in lightweight patterns that speak to me about the joy of dance and fellowship of company members. Without missing a beat, the clean lines and beautiful bodies of Nicholas Andre Dance close out their season at Joyce SoHo flying high in this well-structured repertory work. This is the most versatile of his works featuring beautiful partnering and sections infused with imagery, emotion, and the interesting placement of dancers in space. I am in awe of how easy it seems for this company to present their best, piece after piece. I would really like to see what this choreographer could do with an evening length piece as he has quite a talent for themes, imagery and transitions. Nothing is lost on the audience as each movement on his cast is made manifest.

iDANZ
Eileen Elizabeth
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Skirball Center for the Arts-Dance Gotham

Nicholas Andre Dance's *Until Blue* with choreography by Nick Ross... athletic movement quality shines so brightly... The sextet proves that bike shorts can be made beautiful when donned by the right bodies. With just four dancers on stage unison quickly breaks into dueling duets whose energy encourages the opposite pairing. With the six performers on stage, the energy churns like a tornado that is worth watching without that threatening deathlike quality pervading. They forge harmonies as opposed to dissonant chords.