

PRO DILIGO

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Dance Review December 2009

NICHOLAS ANDRE DANCE: LIONS, TIGERS AND DANCE, OH MY!

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Nicholas Andre Dance, presented at the Joyce SoHo on Thursday, reminded me of something I'd see played out on National Geographic. Nick Ross's dancers are all animal-like in their athletic prowess—whether they are lions or gazelles is completely dependent on their individual abilities.

It was the opening number *Wired* that provoked the feeling of a wild safari in the first place; this do partly because of the might and audacity of dancer Tommy Scrivens. Costumed in a black bodysuit with neon green lightening bolts, his psuedo-hawk dreadlocks fanning in the air, and compact muscles pounding on the stage, he was a lion of a dancer. Strong somehow doesn't cut it as an adjective in Scrivens case. He was so confident and in control of his power that it was difficult to pay attention to whatever else was going on and I couldn't help but want for more solo work.

In juxtaposition to this ferocious tour de force, was dancer Jeremy Nedd who's movements in *Undercurrent* were velvety and deliberate. His long limbs conjured up thoughts of a giraffe in Africa at dusk and moved as slowly as one might underwater. All of *Undercurrent* seemed to provoke a feeling of suppleness, even the typically stark saute passe's seemed softer than usual.

Aaron Walter's embodied more of an element than an animal during *Elegy*. He reminded me of the way dew drops reflect on blades of grass after a spring rain. There is something stark and refreshing about his execution and his pure facility captured the musicality of Philip Glass perfectly.

Passage was a wonderfully layered work composed of breathe-y and folk-like movements. It was easily my favorite of the evening. Borrowed from *Complexions Contemporary Dance*, Juan-Antonio Rodriguez was one of the few that completed each phrases with elegant ease. He really accentuated the beauty of the impeccable technique that is sometimes forgotten by overly ambitious dancers. I couldn't take my eyes off of him, which always presents a problem when you're trying to review a work in it's entirety (but I can't beat myself up for being fixated on beautiful dancing).

(Pro Diligo review cont.)

The Last Man was the softer side of Ross's work. Still doused with leaps and jumps, it managed to evoke the feeling of love lost; like that moment when (years later) you're doing something mundane like washing dishes, and suddenly the loss hits you and your heart actually feels like it's being choked. The men really tug at your sleeve in this piece and I found

it a refreshing drink of what could be deemed as the best of Ross's company.

Following in what seems like a trend of uplifting finales, Until Blue was a parade of acrobatic dance. Like children playing on a trampoline, dancers leaped and winked across the floor with gusto. Set to music by the Vitamin String Quartet, with a backdrop of blue skies and fluffy clouds, it was both innocent and energetic; an ode to youth. As though each dancer was a magnificent bird, each leap seemed to hang in the air as though time had stopped. In a way I wish it did, because ability and endurance is something that is increasingly hard to find on the stages of downtown theaters. (So thank you Mr. Ross, for bringing it back.)