

Pie On The Cherry

Liliana's adventures and interests in dance, art, books and travel

Review: ProArteDanza's 2015 Season

by Liliana Guevara Opinska



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ProArteDanza 2015 Photo credit: Makoto Hirata

Three new works were presented at the opening night of ProArteDanza's 2015 Season on September 23rd at the Fleck Dance Theatre.

All three creations feature bold, challenging and highly physically demanding dancing. Company dancers are up for the challenge. They imprint the movement with their own, unique personality and sensibility. Their physicality and innate understanding of movement are of the highest caliber.

Choreographically both, Mauro Astolfi's and Rayan Lee's works, feature impressive, fast dance of exceptional fluidity. The dancers seem to have no bones as they bend in all possible directions.

Many sections involving partnering are memorable due to the visible understanding that exists between the dancers and their obvious familiarity with one another. The dancers respond to each other's touch without exaggeration, honestly and organically.

Mauro Astolfi's "(don't) follow the instructions" is a piece, as the title suggests, that questions the value of following instructions in every day life but also, more interestingly, "*when it comes to important decisions that can change the course of our existence*". The piece is perhaps too literal and naïve in the presentation of its concepts. As the curtain opens we see dancer, Anisa Tejpar, dressed in a white chef apron. Behind her stands dancer, Daniel McArthur, he controls all of her movements as she "does the dishes". The image is very much theatrical. The way Astolfi chooses to represent and address the questions of decision-making, rule breaking and free will, seemed to me oversimplified and almost cartoonish. The imagery of a kitchen worker/maid/housewife struggling between the everyday obligations and her inner desires is perhaps a little cliché. Company dancers dressed wearing grey-tone clothing seemed to embody both temptation and responsibility; they are the incarnation of Tejpar's inner struggle. The rebellion does not only pertain to washing the dishes, it also encompasses the use of towels and benches in a conventional way. The use of probes in the piece is creative and intriguing as well as physically challenging. The dancers use towels to slide and spin on the floor. Later they wrap themselves in them and lay on the ground, like if they were cocoons. A wooden bench is also cleverly used as a probe to produce some exciting choreographic effects.

Rayan Lee's choreographic debut "*Replace/me*" is about repetition. A memorable section from the piece includes a series of movements executed in the forward direction that are later reproduced as a backwards sequence. Lee pairs up different dancers to repeat sequences, copy them, synchronize and desynchronize movement.

The last piece of the evening is the most intriguing one. Roberto Campanella's and Robert Glumbek's choreography to the 2nd movement of Beethoven's 9th symphony is part of a long-term project to choreograph the 9th symphony in its totality. The most interesting, and at the same time, distracting element of the work are the costumes. Glumbek appears on stage wearing a long, beige trench coat. He

resembles a detective or a pervert. The rest of the dancers wear dark green and beige costumes that resembled working class and peasants clothes. The probes include a row of chairs that are moved around and on which the dancers stand up during parts of the choreography. Although the choreography is intelligent and the dancers embody the music beautifully all this became secondary to me in light of the perplexing choice of costumes. Due, in large part, to the costumes the work had the air of a mockery, joke, prank. It was jovial, refreshing and very unique.

Overall ProArteDanza's ensemble of new works delivers what a company with its reputation is expected to. Above all, the evening is a display of the company dancers' athleticism. Chorographically all three works featured interesting movement sequences, innovative use of probes and space and great, visually stimulating moments of "ahhh". However, often they failed to deliver in terms of thematic content and depth.



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