



DAVID HOU PHOTO
Tyler Gledhill
appears in
Beethoven's 9th,
First Movement,
one of four
separate
performances from
the symphony.

DANCE REVIEW

ProArteDanza mostly keeps its promises

ProArteDanza

★ ★ ½ (out of 4)

Choreography by Roberto Campanella and Robert Glumbek. Until Saturday at Fleck Dance Theatre, 207 Queens Quay W. 416-973-4000 or www.harbourfrontcentre.com

MICHAEL CRABB
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Only the brave venture to make a ballet about a 16th/17th-century astronomer, mathematician, physicist and philosopher; but then Galileo Galilei wasn't your garden variety scientist any more than Roberto Campanella is a run-of-the-mill choreographer.

For one thing, most choreographers don't found dance companies. Yet that's what the Italian-born former National Ballet of Canada dancer did five years ago, promising a troupe that would bridge the gulf between classical and contemporary, and deliver performances fuelled by passion.

By and large, Campanella's ProArteDanza has delivered on those promises although sometimes style and attitude win over choreographic substance and sophistication.

Campanella's *Maria Celeste*, the only new work on a four-part program, has enticing ingredients: a commissioned score by Rick Hyslop; costumes by Evan Biddell; evocative lighting by Bonnie Beecher and vocal contributions from Canadian mezzo-soprano Patricia O'Callaghan. But who, you may well ask, was Maria Celeste, the woman O'Callaghan portrays?

In case you don't know your Galileo from your Gucci, she was the allegedly heretical scientist's illegiti-

mate daughter who became a nun and wrote to the dad she revered during his times of tribulation. Galileo got into trouble with the Church of Rome's nasty Inquisition because of his insistence that a rotating Earth orbits the sun rather than the counter, religiously sanctioned, geocentric orthodoxy.

Brendan Wyatt's *Galileo* seems as bemused as O'Callaghan's Maria is saintly. Meanwhile, a sinister three-man corps, presumably Inquisition operatives, is less than saintly in its manhandling of a gaggle of nuns and intimidation of poor old Galileo.

Other offerings include the Toronto premiere of *Beethoven's 9th - 1st Movement*, commissioned this past summer by the Festival International de DansEncore in Trois-Rivières, Que. ProArteDanza's contribution was part of four separately choreographed components of the full symphony.

As a stand-alone item, the first movement choreography by Campanella and company artistic associate Robert Glumbek is musically truncated and often too enslaved by the score. It's full of portent in its surges of energy as bodies careen across the stage, but beyond this superficial visual appeal there's little else.

High-powered dancing — and very good dancing, too — is equally the major attraction of two older works on the program, Campanella and Glumbek's *Unfinished 32* and the latter's *Hidden Places*. With Schönberg's 1899 *Verklärte Nacht Op 4* in high gear, Glumbek finds ample scope to choreograph a work that the audience of fans lapped up.