

10th Anniversary Season 2014

ProArteDanza

Fleck Dance Theatre, Toronto, Canada, Oct 1 – 4, 2014

ProArteDanza celebrated their ten year anniversary with a retrospective season last week at the Fleck theatre. A city favourite, this hard-working company has a reputation for delivering polished, original work, with a distinct cheekiness. Which isn't to suggest that ProArteDanza is all light; the company's motto, "passion in performance" hints at the driver of much of the company's repertoire: emotion is treated seriously and eloquently, as they delve into the experience of emotion, re-create and explore feeling through dance and performance.

The retrospective opened with a moody, full-length piece. "... in between ..." was created in 2010 by Roberto Campanella and Robert Glumbek, company director and associate respectively. It progresses episodically from sombre to humorous and, at its finest, it changes tone mid-flight, capturing the caprice of emotions in an enduring way.

"... in between ..." uses two plump mattresses for props, at once signalling something domestic and familiar. The dancers dive on and bounce off them in every way imaginable. They traverse spontaneous-

looking actions, slapstick and long, liquid solos cut with turning jumps, where the body seems to go in two directions at once. The dancers made it a pleasure to watch, even where the piece loses momentum, with Tyler Gledhill and Mami Hata the lyrical movers in a cast with attack and drama to burn.

The second half of the program was a survey of nine works from the repertoire, and change of pace. “fractals: a pattern of chaos,” a 2011 work by Guillaume Côté, opened the second act. An energetic, tight composition set to music by Venetian Snares, they both pulse and tremble, and it looks fragile and violent at the same time. The stage is broken into squares of light, with a dancer in each box, and it off it goes from there.

Glancing at the titles of the pieces, it seems there is something vaguely existential going on: “Still,” “Nothing Twice,” “We Will” and “Subsistence.” Then, there is something overtly existential about “Full Bloom:” a charming, outrageous and highly entertaining mediation on “men being men,” danced suavely by Mr. Campanella and Mr. Glumbek, together with John Ottman on the opening night. It was tremendous.

Interspersed were segments of video footage of the company in earlier days. The film segments were genuinely engaging; divulging a little behind the scenes action, occasionally seguing into the work proper,

and keenly edited to showcase some brilliant moments in dance. Johanna Bergfeldt in full flight is a wondrous thing, and then there were some revelatory sequences of Mr. Campanella dancing that seemed to make sense of the entire enterprise. It was suddenly clear to me why Mr. Campanella would pursue the difficult dream of creating a company in Toronto—because it needed something exciting, daring and very present. In ProArteDanza, that's exactly what it got.