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Promotions

Passionate Ballet BC opens Pillow season

By Wendy Liberatore June 25, 2015



Peter Smida and Emily Chessa of Ballet BC in "Twenty Eight Thousand Waves." (Photo by Christopher Duggan)

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BECKET, Mass. — Time and again, Igor Stravinsky’s powerful “The Rite of Spring” has inspired striking ballets. And this week at Jacob’s Pillow, Ballet BC offered yet another.

“Consagracion,” choreographed by Gustavo Ramirez Sansano, made for a strong opener to the 83rd season at the summer dance venue. On Wednesday night, the work seethed with raw sexuality, which the music pushed to tingling suspense and fear.

The familiar score propelled the anxious dance, in which 14 were drawn into a shadowy world. They were slowly lured upstage as the music hummed like a swarm of birds. As the music transitioned to its rhythmic thump and shouting horns, the dancers raced about, as if insane. They rushed each other, nearly touching and sniffing necks and shoulders like curious animals.

As they paired off, stripping their white hospital gowns, the encounters expressed desperation and violence as they clung and clawed at each other, ravaging every inch of each other’s bodies. Two dancers, Darren Devaney and Christoph von Riedemann, stood in the center of all the couplings — embracing in a deep kiss and tangling in a push and pull of limbs and torsos, astonishing for its speed and syncopation that matched the rough-hew of the compelling score.

Certainly “Consagracion” was the most forcible of the trio of works presented by Ballet BC. However, all the works

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Ballet BC

WHEN: 8 p.m. tonight, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday

WHERE: Jacob's Pillow, Route 20, Becket, Mass.

TICKETS: \$69, \$59 and \$39

MORE INFO: 413-243-0745, www.jacobspillow.org

were exhausting to both the dancers and the audience.

The evening opened with William Forsythe's "workwithinwork," a jagged ballet that felt like a visit to a rehearsal or ballet class.

Cast in lighting that either kept the dancers in darkness or revealed half of their forms (a Forsythe propensity), the ballet had the dancers standing like statues as others performed movement phrases that felt unfinished or disconnected to the whole. It was as if Forsythe put together things that he liked, but didn't know what to do with.

The dancing was amazing, and some sections were interesting, especially the solos by Devaney where he twisted as if caught a windstorm. But "workwithinwork" was agonizing — too long and disjointed.

The night concluded with Cayetano Soto's dynamic "Twenty Eight Thousand Waves." To music by David Lang and Bryce Dessner, this was yet another test of the dancers and audiences' stamina.

The piece began with the women strutting in dim profiles. But the men soon took over, undulating with a row of blinding lights pointed into the eyes of the audience.

When the lights were lowered the men and women united for a high-flying finale of lifts galore. It ended with the curtain closing on just one dancer — Alexis Fletcher — coiling her limbs and torso like a flamenco senorita gone to an extreme.

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