

Dance Review: Ballet BC jolts Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival back to life



Peter Smida and Emily Chessa of Ballet BC in "Twenty Eight Thousand Waves," one of the pieces being performed this weekend by the ballet company at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Becket. (Photo by Christopher Duggan, courtesy of Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival)



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BECKET - Three different dances created by three different choreographers for one dance company might sound like a recipe for disaster.

Every choreographer has their own unique style. Trying to blend them all together in the same performance with the same dancers can often be a challenge.

But some dance companies manage to do it and make such challenging work look easy. Groups like the [Joffrey Ballet](#), Hubbard Street Dance, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet and Nederlands Dans Theater all excel at presenting different choreographers' visions.

Add another exceptional dance company to the list of versatile virtuosos - Ballet BC, who officially kicked off the first week at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival with a jolt of energy this week that will be hard to top.

Performing through Sunday at the Pillow, Ballet BC's program features three terrific pieces by three different choreographers: William Forsythe's "workwithinwork," Gustavo Ramirez Sansano's "Consagracion" and Cayetano Soto's "Twenty Eight Thousand Waves."

Each of the three pieces had a very distinct look and feel. And yet, the entire program felt as if it were created by a single choreographer.

It's also rare for every piece on a multi-work program to be equally great. And yet, there was no single work that stood out among the three Ballet BC performed Friday night at Jacob's Pillow. Each ensemble piece was equally amazing in its own unique way.

Forsythe's "workwithinwork" kicked off the program and set the perfect tone. Born and raised in New York and Florida, Forsythe's work has always strangely felt European. That's probably because he worked for many years with the Frankfurt Ballet in Germany.

Forsythe has a gift for creating unique, angular dances that feel like a combination of Paul Taylor's lyricism and Merce Cunningham's abstract, clinical precision. There's no story in "workwithinwork." Instead, Forsythe twists and bends traditional ballet movements into fast-moving, abstract movements that quickly move from one position into the next.

"workwithinwork" contains an astounding number of movements. And Ballet BC executed every single one to perfection.

Sansano's "Consagracion" offered a bold, inventive look inspired by a now classic ballet work. Set to the music of Igor Stravinsky's pulsating "Rite of Spring," "Consagracion" bears almost no resemblance to the original, 1913 masterpiece about the sacrifice of "the chosen one." Instead, Sansano writes in the program that he created the piece as an ode to puberty, that amazing, awkward time when children transform into adults like caterpillars turning into butterflies.

However, watching the piece, "Consagracion" felt more like a piece about the transition from life to the afterlife. All the dancers were dressed in white at the start of the piece, arranged in a single row near the front of the stage. They then slowly moved one by one towards the back of the dark, slightly smokey stage.

Eventually, like caterpillars, the dancers shed most of their clothes and performed wearing barely anything. The piece didn't feel sexual or sensational. It was moving, stark and featured more abstract, angular movements that seemed to pulsate with energy like the ones presented in "workwithinwork."

The final piece on the program, Soto's "Twenty Eight Thousand Waves," kept the high level of dancing and choreography set by the first two pieces going. Watching "Twenty Eight Thousand Waves," I was simply awestruck by how outstanding all of the dancers are in Ballet BC. Certain performers stood out at certain times. But watching all of them perform together on stage was what stuck in my mind most of all. They were all simply electrifying.

And as I said earlier, I honestly couldn't pick a single favorite piece among the three works performed by Ballet BC. They were all outstanding - and the perfect way to kick off another exciting season at Jacob's Pillow.

Ballet BC will perform through Sunday at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, 358 George Carter Road, Becket. Remaining performances are Saturday at 2 and 8 p.m., Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets range from \$ 39 to \$69. To order tickets or for more information about these performances, [contact Jacob's Pillow](#) or call the box office at (413) 243-0745.

The Pillow also presents [New York Theatre Ballet](#) in "Cinderella" in the Doris Duke Theatre through Sunday. Remaining performances are Saturday at 2:15 p.m. and 8:15 p.m., Sunday at 2:15 p.m. Tickets range from \$25 to \$35. To purchase tickets or for more information, contact Jacob's Pillow or call (413) 243-0745.

NEXT WEEK AT JACOB'S PILLOW

The Pillow presents [Dorrance Dance with Toshi Reagon and BIGLovely](#) (July 1-5) in the Ted Shawn Theatre. Tickets range from \$39 to \$69. Discount tickets available to certain performances. Tap dancing phenom Michelle Dorrance has performed several times at Jacob's Pillow. Read past reviews of Dorrance's [2014 Jacob Pillow performance](#) and an [interview with Dorrance](#) in 2013 [here](#).

BODYTRAFFIC (July 1-5) -Aug. 3) perform in the Doris Duke Theatre. Tickets range from \$35 to \$45. According to the Pillow's website, "This on-the-rise ensemble from Los Angeles makes a big impression with athleticism, style, and versatility. Their program includes the dramatic, suspenseful work "Dust," by Israeli

choreographer Hofesh Shechter; "Once again, before you go," a new dance by Victor Quijada of RUBBERBANDance Group; and "The New 45," a jazzy duet by Richard Siegal."



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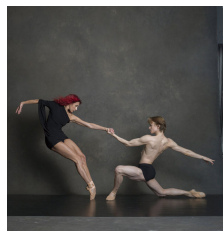
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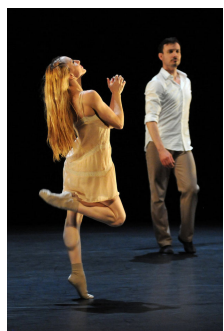
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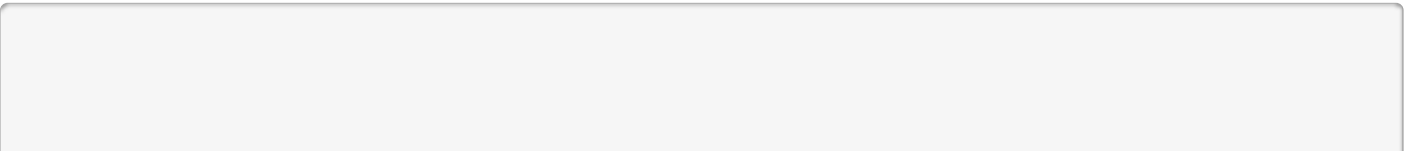
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