

Hot Ticket: Ballet BC's Trace

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He is an icon of contemporary dance, a prolific choreographer credited with stretching the boundaries of ballet for more than three decades – and now Ballet BC is presenting the Canadian premiere of William Forsythe's *workwithinwork*.

“This work is a wonderful example of Bill taking the classical idiom but demanding that it be observed in a contemporary way. His scores are so woven, so sophisticated,” says Ballet BC artistic director Emily Molnar, who spent several years dancing with the Frankfurt Ballet under Mr. Forsythe's direction. For the dancers, she adds, the work is both challenging and liberating.

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“He pays so much attention to counterpoint, to the architecture of space,” Ms. Molnar says of the piece, which is divided into 29 solos, duets and group pieces, and set to an intimate score by Luciano Berio. “And the wonderful thing about Bill's work is it empowers you, because it's such a bold gesture in space. He makes you move three-dimensionally and big and broad, but it's also very detailed, very musical, very intricate and very fast.”

Mr. Forsythe's *workwithinwork* is being presented as part of Trace, a program that includes pieces by two other renowned international choreographers.

Italian dance maker Walter Matteini is presenting the world premiere of an emotionally charged new work that explores the lighter and darker sides of ourselves in a way that Ms. Molnar says is clear and infused with meaning, but skirts the pitfalls of melodrama and sentimentality.

“It's hard to deal with the large questions of birth, life, death and all that is in between,” she says. “But he's able to get to emotions in a way that is quite beautiful and quite rare.”

For the poetic *Petite Cérémonie*, which was a crowd favourite when Ballet BC premiered the work in 2011, French choreographer Medhi Walerski – also a guest choreographer for one of Europe's top companies, Nederlands Dans Theater – asked dancers to explore what it would feel like to live life in a box, and in the process mined the male-female divide.

“He's talking about the differences between the male and the female brain. There is one part in the piece where he jokes that men can only think about one thing at a time, and that they actually have one box in their brain that has absolutely nothing in it and that's their favourite one, whereas women are like Facebook: We can connect everything with everything,” Ms. Molnar says with a laugh. “It's a wonderful piece.”

Trace is at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre until Saturday (ticketmaster.ca [<http://ticketmaster.ca/>]).