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REVIEW: BALLET BC'S "PROGRAM 1"

November 5, 2016 · by JJ Brewis · in Performing Arts, Reviews

Over its last few seasons, Ballet BC has broken the mold, made a new mold, and broken that one as well. Ever so faithful to innovation, experimentation, and avant-garde leanings, the local dance company manages to up its collective ante time and again by pushing the envelope, and challenging both their own artists and audiences with material that reshapes the landscape of dance through artistry and physicality.

On tonight's season premiere of *Program 1*, the collective managed to, once again, exceed expectations with an array of work that was both awe inspiring and creatively solid. The first difference in format for the evening was that the entire program was choreographed by one person alone. In previous recent outings, Ballet BC has treated audiences to a variation of works by, typically, three separate choreographers. Not tonight, though.

event listings

February 7, 2017

Sam Roberts Band
"Terraform Tour" w/
Hollerado @ The
Orpheum, 601 Smithe
St, Vancouver, BC V6B
3L4, Canada

February 7, 2017

**Cherry Glazerr w/ Slow
Hollows** @ The Cobalt
Cabaret, 917 Main St,
Vancouver, BC V6A 2V8,
Canada

February 8, 2017

**Run The Jewels "Run
The World Tour w/ The
Gaslamp Killer,
Gangsta Boo, Nick
Hook and Cuz"** @ PNE
Forum, 2901 E Hastings
St, Vancouver, BC V5K
5J1, Canada

February 9, 2017

**Reel Big Fish and Anti-
Flag "Celebrating 20
Years" w/ Ballyhoo!
And Pkew Pkew Pkew**
@ Commodore
Ballroom, 868 Granville
St, Vancouver, BC V6Z



Ballet BC Dancers Livona Ellis and Brandon Alley in BEGINNING AFTER as part of Ballet BC's presentation of *Program 1*. All photographs by Cindi Wicklund.

In her opening remarks, Artistic Director Emily Molnar mentioned that the entire evening would feature works by the company's Resident Choreographer Cayetano Soto. The other different component to tonight's program in particular was the addition of a fourth work, changing the structure from the trio of pieces audiences have become used to seeing from Ballet BC. It seems that just as an audience becomes comfortable or comes to expect a certain thing from this company, they find a need to flip those ideals on their head with new, innovative techniques.

It's working. Tonight's *Program 1* was a stunning, captivating love letter to contemporary dance, featuring fully realized, conceptually articulate components that cohesively create one of the most breathtaking and moving evenings of entertainments in recent memory. The pieces elicit major mood, ominous in tone, and entirely striking from start to finish.

1K3, Canada

February 9, 2017
Dierks Bentley @
 Rogers Arena, 800
 Griffiths Way, Vancouver,
 BC V6B 6G1, Canada

February 11, 2017
Prof "Time Bomb Tour"
 @ Fortune Sound Club,
 147 E Pender St,
 Vancouver, BC V6A 1T5,
 Canada

February 11, 2017
**The 4th Annual Boots
 N' Babes Ball w/
 Washboard Union and
 DJ jaXon Hawks @**
 Commodore Ballroom,
 868 Granville St,
 Vancouver, BC V6Z 1K3,
 Canada

February 14, 2017
LEON w/ Jacob Banks
 @ Biltmore Cabaret,
 2755 Prince Edward St,
 Vancouver, BC V5T 0B5,
 Canada

February 16, 2017
Cloud Nothings @
 Biltmore Cabaret, 2755
 Prince Edward St,
 Vancouver, BC V5T 0B5,
 Canada

February 16, 2017
**Billy Talent "Afraid of
 Heights Tour" w/
 Monster Truck and The
 Dirty Nil @ Abbotsford
 Centre, 33800 King Rd,
 Abbotsford, BC V2S
 8H8, Canada**

February 16, 2017
**Matthew Good w/ Craig
 Stickland @**
 Commodore Ballroom,
 868 Granville St,
 Vancouver, BC V6Z 1K3,
 Canada

February 17, 2017
Thundercat "2017



Ballet BC dancers Alexis Fletcher and Scott Fowler in *Sortijas* as part of Ballet BC's presentation of *Program 1*. All photographs by Cindi Wicklund.

To speak about each component separately almost feels like a disservice to Soto's vision. The pieces are structured and placed together in an almost narrative-like positioning. We start the evening with the mesh outfit-laden *Beginning After*, truly setting the dark tone for the evening with stark, jarring movements, and haunting music composed by Handel. The eerie vibes are kept in check for the two middle, shorter pieces *Fugaz* and *Sortijas*, the latter an exclusive duet with dancers Scott Fowler and Alexis Fletcher. The entire evening comes to a close with the World Premiere *Schachmatt*, a more playful, brighter exploration of form, featuring Italian and Spanish music and the evening's only use of colour in costuming.

Ultimately, even though the audience chuckles through moments of *Schachmatt*, the piece appears in the shadow of its darker successors, casting questions if this piece itself is intended to feel a bit evocative of darkness itself, with elements of unpredictability and suspense in its midst. Like the appearance of a child's toy or upbeat music in a horror music, the lightness of *Schachmatt* was juxtaposed with a lurking sinister atmosphere.

The interplay of truth versus memory from *Beginning After* held over in the rest of the evening, in the best, subtle ways. *Fugaz*, says Soto, is about the choreographer's own father, and felt both loving but heavy with mourning in its longing, wistful movements. The shorter *Sortijas* felt entirely anxiety inducing, with aggressive, shocking movements that included several seeming gravity defying moments. Ultimately, we have an evening that managed to invoke and be inspired by so many facets of the human condition, and wrap them all up into a beautiful, sincere tribute to dance through Soto's articulate, detailed vision. Bravo.

Ballet BC's Program 1 runs at Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Theatre through November 5, 2016.

[Tickets are available here.](#)

*Header photograph: Ballet BC Dancers Emily Chessa, Andrew Bartee and Alexis Fletcher in *Schachmatt* as part of Ballet BC's presentation of *Program 1*. All photographs by Cindi Wicklund.*

World Tour" @
Rickshaw Theatre, 254
E Hastings St,
Vancouver, BC V6A 1P1,
Canada

February 17, 2017
The Staves @ Fortune
Sound Club, 147 E
Pender St, Vancouver,
BC V6A 1T5, Canada

February 19, 2017
**Liftoff: Canada's
Biggest Influencer Tour
feat. Shane Harte,
Kristen Hancher,
Sebastian Olzanski,
Andrew Gregory, Jillea
and Charlie @** Vogue
Theatre, 918 Granville
St, Vancouver, BC V6Z
1L2, Canada

February 19, 2017
USS w/ Repartee @
Commodore Ballroom,
868 Granville St,
Vancouver, BC V6Z 1K3,
Canada

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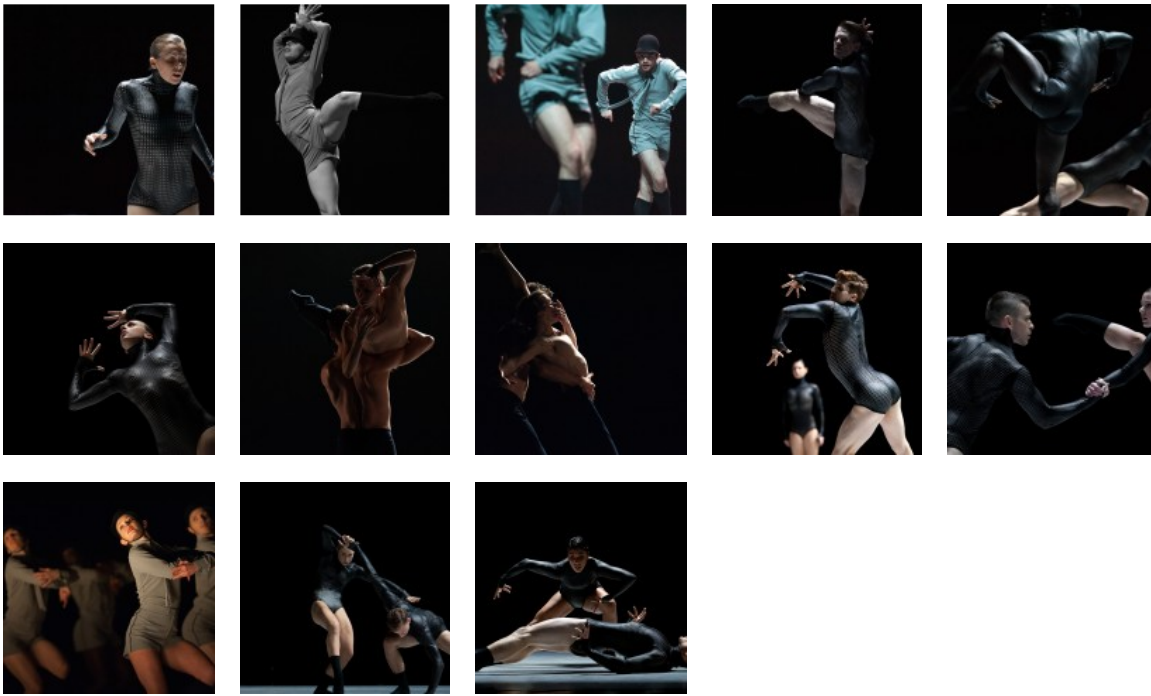
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One Response



Carol Carson November 7, 2016 at 10:49 am · [Reply](#) →

We saw the ballet and loved it. This review was almost as beautiful to read as the ballet was to watch.

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