

Second show still dances on fresh legs

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For The Dispatch

Continuing its snapshot of American dance in the early 21st century, BalletMet's second program of *30X30*, performed last night at the company's Performance Space, contained a mix of reprises from the first program plus a dozen more premieres.

Thaddeus Davis' *Opus A*, which opened, made wry use of standard ballet positions in a pas de six though the bit at the end for the girls was gratuitous. In another work for six dancers, *Shoreline* by William Soleau, Jamie Dee stands gazing at the ocean and finds – not a love note in a bottle - but a man washing up against her feet like driftwood, an interesting take, perhaps, on the order of things. Still the piece comes across as ultra-romantic.

Honorable Sky, by Michael Uthoff, employs dappled costumes and lighting to music with Native American flutist Carlos Nakai to evoke the vast and timeless aura of the American Southwest. The first movement of Tom Gold's *Maquillage* seemed almost a contemporary take on *Les Sylphides*, with Dmitri Suslov cast as the poet in search of the ideal among bevy of ballerinas (either that or a glimpse at the lovelife of a certain retired Russian dancer).

Drift, a pas de quatre in sequenced movement by Alex Ketley, explores accelerating intensity among two couples. Here, the deeply emotional quality of Adrienne Benz's dancing – as also later in Amy Seiwert's *Way to Blue* opposite an elegant David Tlaiye – couldn't help but catch the eye.

Second nights on a couple of pieces yielded stronger performances. This was certainly true of Christian Broomhall and Hitomi Yamada in Ma Cong's clever *Two of Us* and Yamada opposite Tlaiye in Adam Hundt's *Bang, Bang (My Baby Shot Me Dead)*, the latter a duet both beautiful and tragic. Jimmy Orrante's *Emergence* (which might describe his rapid development as a choreographer) also looked elegant in its separate duets brought seamlessly together at the close.

Molly Lynch's *Trio* began with a strong and unusual entrance and kept the ballerina – Emily Ramirez - on a pedestal throughout. Harrison McEldowney's unsettling quartet of buoyant, smiley ladies – *Between My Legs* - is set to a nasty song and the opposites make for an edgy statement about love and violence. The evening closed with a celebratory *Greeting Prelude* by Graham Lustig that begin formally with Stravinsky and then cut loose into a company finale to *Happy Birthday*.

Last night's second performance of Randy Duncan's solo *Everyday People* made me realize I misread this piece at the premiere. It is a solo full of joy, music at its soul, and Jeff Wolfe boogies and explodes in the short but unforgettable piece.

This ballet and Wolfe's dancing epitomize BalletMet Columbus in its 30th year. The company is not only unusually versatile, hardworking and "together" as an organization. It is made up of fine dancers who are much more than technicians: they're performers.

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