

World Premiere Ballet by
Peter Martins
 Mirage June 22, 23, 26

Commissioned Score
 Composed and Conducted
Esa-Pekka Salonen
 Featuring Guest Violinist
Leila Josefowicz

DANCE REVIEW

Let's Get Serious and Severe (and Dance With a Stool)

By CLAUDIA LA ROCCO

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Let's get one thing out of the way: 2 hours 15 minutes is far too long for a dance sampler. Curatorial prudence, people!

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Ruby Washington/The New York Times

Rosso Bastardo Evening: From left, Jack Ferver, Liz Santoro and Darrin Wright performed in this dance sampler at La MaMa.

That said, there were several points of interest at the Rosso Bastardo Evening on Thursday, a mostly Italian affair included in the La MaMa Moves Dance Festival 2010. One was the free alcohol (though not for this critic, alas), courtesy of the sponsor, Signae Cesarini Sartori Winery.

While audience members drank and made merry, the stage goings on were almost uniformly serious and severe, with many short pieces seeming more like repetitive movement studies than fully conceptualized performances. Tight but fluid phrases, and deft, sometimes knotty shifts characterized several of the works on the bill.

In "As a Wrinkle," Amina Amici offered an inward-looking, restless portrait in which physical impulses died as quickly as they flared up. She is a handsome performer, though her choreography was slight, and too preoccupied at times with incorporating a small stool.

Props played a similarly predictable role in "Waiting," by Sara Libori and Arianna De Angelis Marocco. The two tangled with chairs, a desk, a foam mattress and other objects, sometimes evoking pale echoes of [Pina Bausch](#). And let us not tarry on the kitschy eroticism of "Samadhi," in which the bare-breasted, stone-faced Benedetta Mazzotti, Eleonora Cantarini and Giovanna Rovedo twined themselves and their clothes about one another to little effect.

Less flashy but far richer was "The Crow," a jittery solo by Elena Giannotti, with a sci-fi-like collage score by Dorota Konczewska. Chewing mechanically on a wad of gum, Ms. Giannotti cycled through clipped, hinging phrases, using small surprising steps to move about a heavily shadowed stage. She was detached, unearthly, an alien visitor inspecting the landscape and deciding whether to do harm or good.

Harm ruled the day in a short version of Jack Ferver's 2009 work "Death Is Certain," an engrossing trio for Mr. Ferver, Darrin Wright and Liz Santoro, featuring delicate live accompaniment by the pianist and singer John McGrew. All is fair in Mr. Ferver's nasty little worlds of desire, where love always hurts.

Not so in Nicholas Leichter and Monstah Black's "Home," a brief teaser from "The Whiz: Obamaland," which is to have its premiere at the Abrons Arts Center on Wednesday. Mr. Black, resplendent in devilish silver platforms, sang as Mr. Leichter and Stephanie Liapis mixed and matched street and classical movement and, finally, donned their ruby red shoes: flats for her, heels for him.

Why in particular were "Home" and "Death Is Certain," both by Americans, on this program? Never a good question with La MaMa samplers. This one's final piece was an excerpt of Ella Ben-Aharon and Edo Ceder's "Pericardium." Both are strong movers, but the work, like the evening, was overpacked.

The La MaMa Moves Dance Festival 2010 runs through Sunday at La MaMa, 74A East Fourth Street, East Village; (212) 475-7710, lamama.org.

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: June 15, 2010

A dance review on Monday about the Rosso Bastardo Evening at La MaMa in the East Village, using information from the program, omitted part of the name of the winery that sponsored the event. It is Signae Cesarini Sartori, not Signae.

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