

## The New York Times

### For Healing, Not Words But Bodies in Motion

“Fall and Recover,” a production by the Irish contemporary choreographer John Scott, is named after Doris Humphrey’s concept of fall and recovery in dance, essentially

**GIA  
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**DANCE  
REVIEW**

when the body is caught between two worlds. In this place one can express the tension between lightness and weight.

That said, Mr. Scott’s “Fall and Recover” has heavy underpinnings. The work, seen on Friday night at the Ellen Stewart Theater at La MaMa, stems from a workshop Mr. Scott taught at the Center for the Care of Survivors of Torture in Dublin. At the time he had no intention of creating a piece. During a postshow discussion Kiribu, a performer from a country that the program specified as “in eastern Africa,” spoke about her eagerness to choose dance over words as a form of healing. The body, she explained, would then be able to “talk its own language.”

But when does therapy turn into art? In “Fall and Recover” the brutalities experienced by many in the cast, which includes

“Fall and Recover” continues through Saturday at the Ellen Stewart Theater at La MaMa, 66 East Fourth Street between Second Avenue and Bowery, East Village; (212) 475-7710 or lamama.org.

#### ONLINE: ‘FALL AND RECOVER’

More photos of the performance:

[nytimes.com/dance](http://nytimes.com/dance)

10 survivors of torture who came from 9 countries to seek asylum in Ireland, are left unspoken. But while the performers possess a quiet power, “Fall and Recover,” set to Rossa O’Snodaigh’s spare and unduly respectful multi-instrument score, doesn’t result in an especially powerful evening.

There are effective moments, as when the performers, dressed in white, hold hands and rotate in a single, pristine line while sticking close together for support. And when the charismatic Mufutau Kehinde Yusuf, from Nigeria, is onstage, it’s hard to look anywhere else. His buoyant jump is one thing — he seems to float higher and higher as he springs repeatedly in the air — but it is his calm and the faint sadness in his eyes that really knock you out.

Unfortunately the cast also includes two members of Mr. Scott’s Irish Modern Dance Theater. Mr. Scott has said in interviews that professional dancers were included as a way to hold the choreography together, but they are distractions. You anticipate their every move.

While “Fall and Recover” is nonnarrative, the space at times



JULIETA CERVANTES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**Fall and Recover** Kiribu in the Irish choreographer John Scott’s dance piece, performed at the Ellen Stewart Theater at La MaMa.

reverberates with a flurry of voices and languages; such mystery doesn’t free the dance of its heavy-handedness. At the start the stage is covered in white paper. The performers draw flowers and houses — this is home, be-

fore the trouble started — and then tear it all to shreds to show how quickly life was ripped apart.

Other moments are undercut by Mr. Scott’s emphasis on breath — we hear the loud inhale

and the even louder exhale — and partnering sections that are clearly based on trust. They come off as exercises; too much of “Fall and Recover” feels like a cathartic act. Still, the end is striking: the performers lie on

the floor and trace their bodies with salt before exiting — or leaving the past behind. The stage, glowing under blue lights, resembles an abandoned lot full of Keith Haring drawings. It’s an eerily beautiful sight.