

Time Out

New York

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Theater

Reviews

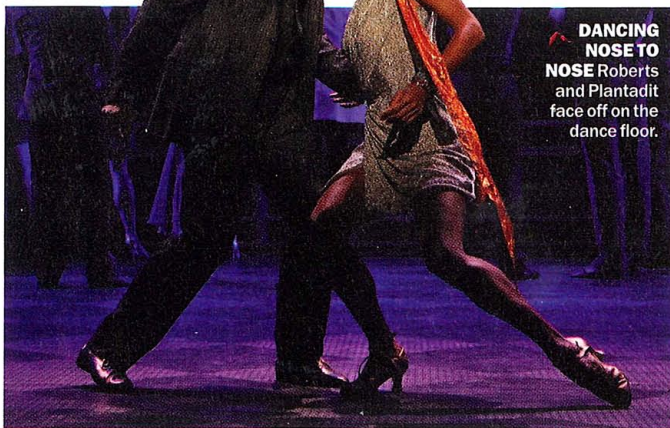
Come Fly Away

★★★★☆

Marquis Theatre (see Broadway). Book by Twyla Tharp. Music and lyrics by various writers. Dir. Tharp. With ensemble cast. 2hrs. One intermission.

Twyla Tharp's *Come Fly Away* is not just the best date show on Broadway; it's a bit like being on a great date yourself. First you're in a retro nightclub, soaking in a bubbly bath of dance, romance and classic Frank Sinatra tunes; and then... bang! Things get wild. If last summer's *Burn the Floor* was the Terpsichorean equivalent of pornography—all flash and thrust and money moves—*Come Fly Away* gets at its erotics more genuinely, charged by Tharp's electrified ballet.

As Sinatra's own voice plays spectrally over a cooking live orchestra and songbird (Hilary Gardner), Tharp's superb company of dancers enacts the courtship rites of a quartet of couples. John Selya's sensitive, maturely masculine dancing is the closest analogue to Sinatra's singing; he is well paired with the elegant Holley Farmer. Matthew Stockwell Dibble brings classical grace to his role as Farmer's jilted beau, who finds consolation in the arms of Rika Okamoto; Laura



DANCING NOSE TO
NOSE Roberts and Plantadit face off on the dance floor.

Mead and the ebullient Charlie Neshya-Hodges provide buoyant comic relief. And the pantherine Karine Plantadit dances with breathtaking charisma and daring as a force of Dionysian disruption who must be tamed by the commanding Keith Roberts; I literally gasped in happy surprise at some of her moves. (An alternate cast performs the show at matinees.)

The play of these four couples in Act I is foreplay for Act II, in which the nightclub becomes something closer to a sex club, and many of the dancers strip down to their skivvies.

If *Come Fly Away* lacks the emotional pull of Tharp's 2002 hit, *Movin' Out*, the familiarity of the Sinatra music frees you to focus on the expressiveness of the dancers' bodies and the dynamic range of Tharp's choreography. The orgiastic mood of the second act is somewhat compromised by a pro forma finale of "New York, New York." But even in the show's lesser moments, you are keenly aware of Tharp's artistry: She does it her way. And if you let yourself yield to her, *Come Fly Away* may well leave you dancing on air.
—Adam Feldman