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ART

## A Rite of Spring: CounterPointe3

by Paul D'Agostino | 04/22/2015 6:18 AM |  No Comments



**CounterPointe3**  
The Actors Fund Arts Center  
160 Schermerhorn Street, Downtown Brooklyn

Contemporary ballet performances, so variably rooted in and thus replete with bursts of movement, expressive floridity and polyphonically mediated dynamism, seem particularly well suited for springtime entertainment. So it was a rather properly timed delight to have occasion to take in *CounterPointe3*—a collaborative suite of newly choreographed pieces presented by Norte Maar and Brooklyn Ballet, at The Actors Fund Center—on a recent Sunday afternoon. The weather that day, mid-60s and sunny, just happened to be definitively vernal. The pieces overall were definitively superb.

Julia Gleich's dance performances—perhaps especially those produced under the aegis of Norte Maar—tend to entail extensive collaborations among choreographers, dancers, visual artists, musicians and various other creatives, deeply seasoned and up-and-coming alike. Even the more dance-focused, indeed *pointe*-focused *CounterPointe* series—considering not only its constituent components, but also the number and creative breadth of its involved participants—has proven to be no exception to the rule. For this third annual iteration, a visual artist, Brece Honeycutt, designed the dancers' costumes for Gleich's opening piece, "Intermezzo," which also featured a soundscape and live piano accompaniment by composer Elizabeth Myers. Several of the pieces featured elements of poetry, video and film-audio excerpts. Incorporated into "Quill/t," in fact, as an elevated backdrop—all meta-material puns most surely intended by the piece's choreographers themselves, Lynn Parkerson and Gleich—was a projection, by David Chang, in which a writer's hand is shown obsessively executing scrawled, scripted and 'drawn' repetitions of the piece's titular term. What's more, much of the score was provided by the scraping, sweeping 'beat' of the pen's incessantly frictional motion, making "Quill/t" a rather functional distillation of *CounterPointe3*'s sundry interdisciplinaries. (Also of note, even if only extra-curricularly to, or partially outside of, the performances themselves: one of the choreographers, Donna Salgado, has also published a children's book, *Crafterina*, with her sister; and thanks to *Counterpointe3*, bands like Fugazi, Interpol and Boards of Canada can now—like Brahms and Bach have done many times over—add some ballet-related lines to their resumes.)

Notwithstanding *Counterpointe3*'s broad interdisciplinary spread, choreographic elasticities and dramatic details still ruled the day. A certain movement in Gleich's "Intermezzo," for instance, in which three dancers attached themselves to one another like a triptych of interlocking T's, then slid out of formation like a puzzle sliding off a table, was jarringly curious enough to remain an indelible sight. Similarly unforgettable was the rainy-day-at-home casualness, bluesy and brilliant insouciance, and dramatico-narrative economy of "run-on sentences of I miss you...", choreographed and danced by Kayla Harley, in which a sassily melancholic protagonist meanders from moodily robotic movements of tacit defiance to gestures of half-caring resignation, from springing into the hopeful throes of running out a door to silkily crumpling, in restless boredom, to the floor. In Eryn Renee Young's "Anodynia," airs of gestural escapism, combined with the bracingly heavy strummings and percussive rumblings of music by Break of Reality, made the piece feel like a theatrical prelude to a pending disaster, one that perhaps some unstated legend had foretold would engender an auspicious rebirth. The performance's closing piece, "Nouveau," by Katie Rose McLaughlin, was imbued with an immersively eerie, somewhat Lynchian ambience in which the dancers' ostensible disquiet, as expressed through some of their movements, was strangely at odds with their broad, fixed smiles—as if they were having fun in a place where fun is forbidden, or milling about with mirthful fright in an abandoned amusement park, or playing less-than-willful roles in a questionably innocent puppet show in a red-light district.

*Counterpointe3* has come and gone, but for anyone who attended one of its three reportedly sold-out performances, its ten constituent pieces will not soon be forgotten. For those of you who missed it, worry not. Both Norte Maar and Brooklyn Ballet have plenty more programming in store for the coming weeks and months, some of which is sure to involve the participation of a similar, and similarly interdisciplinary, roster of choreographers, dancers and artists. So check out their websites and make your agendas. If you happen to catch one of their performances quite soon—say, on a sunny day this spring—then all the better.

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