

to Dance

Woolf's rhythms inspire work

World premiere of "After the Light"

With her slippery modernist prose and extended interior soliloquies, Virginia Woolf's novels have proved famously resistant to cinematic interpretation. They haven't found much resonance in the world of dance, either, where movement



ANDREW GILBERT
DANCE CARD

is much better suited for expressing action and vivid emotion than reflective states of mind.

But one San Francisco choreographer isn't afraid of Virginia Woolf. Liss Fain Dance presents the world premiere of "After the Light" at Z Space from Jan. 9-12, a performance installation inspired by Woolf's experimental 1931 novel "The Waves." The piece is Fain's third collaboration in four years with a creative team that includes visual designer Matthew Antaky, costume designer Mary Domenico and composer Dan Wool, who has incorporated spoken passages from "The Waves" into the score.

For Fain, the text was the project's launching point. Rather than trying to glean action and incident from Woolf's lapidary approach to time and character, she "uses the text the way I'd use a musical score, drawing on Woolf's rhythms and cadences, images and ideas when I create movement.

"I don't try to portray this in any narrative fashion," Fain says. "It's not about somebody doing something and then something happens. It's really about an



COURTESY OF RJ MUNA

Liss Fain Dance company presents the world premiere of "After the Light," an immersive theatrical work drawn from the prose of author Virginia Woolf.

unfolding understanding of life. It's about solos and introspection and the outward energy of a solo. I've tried to bring out the emotional elements in relationships."

An award-winning choreographer whose dance company has been active in San Francisco since 1990, Fain has assembled a stellar cast of six dancers for "After the Light," including Jeremiah Crank, Katharine Hawthorne, Alec Lytton, Carson Stein and sisters Megan and Shannon Kurashige, whose company Sharp & Fine just presented a captivating production at Z Space based on a narrative poem of Neil Gaiman's, "Queen of Knives."

More than a dance performance, "After the Light" is an immersive theatrical experience. Designed to evoke the feeling of a medieval cloister with a walkway surrounding a central courtyard, Antaky's set consists of a series of elegant arches through which the audience is encouraged to wander. Rather than the strict temporal control inherent

in most dance productions, Fain invites audiences to experience the subjective flow of time in Woolf's prose.

"She opens the book with this very present burst of childhood energy, and then as young adults who feel like they own the world and the future is theirs to define," Fain says. "And then she takes it to when they're older and more reflective, thinking about who they are and choices they've made and the people they never will become. She so beautifully defines how other people influence who you are and how you gradually perceive that in your life."

Exploring the elusive abstraction of Woolf's writing in an installation requires a level of creative confidence that's grown over the course of several projects. The team first collaborated on 2010's "The False and True Are One," an installation inspired by Lydia Davis' writing performed by Jeri Lynn Cohen.

Building on the text of Jamaica Kincaid's short story collection "At the Bottom of the River," Fain's

team created the 2012 installation "The Water is Clear and Still," which allowed audiences to walk around and through the set during the performance. With "After the Light," the team expanded the audience's realm, placing them inside the action, much like Woolf puts readers in the heads of her characters.

"In the first and second installations," Fain says, "we created environments where the audience could walk around the performance space. This time, I wanted a large, open performance area and the set to be on the outside, so it's surrounding the dancers and the audience is inside the set."

Details: Liss Fain Dance premieres "After the Light" Jan. 9-12 at Z Space, 450 Florida St., San Francisco. Tickets are \$30 in advance, \$35 at the door and \$15 for students and seniors, and can be purchased online at zspace.org, or by calling 800-838-3006.

Contact Andrew Gilbert at jazzscribe@aol.com.

BANKHEAD THEATER

SEASON

13/14



Livermore School of Dance
Jazz Company
Steppin' Up
ALL 4 ONE CAUSE
saturday **jan 4** at 2 & 7pm

Heartfelt Folk Harmonies
Wollin' Jennys
saturday **jan 11** at 8pm

Tri-Valley Repertory Theatre
Drowsy Chaperone
jan 18,24,25,31 at 8pm
jan 19,26 at 2pm
saturday **feb 1** at 2 & 8pm



Global Greats of the Acoustic Guitar
**International
Guitar Night**
wednesday **jan 22** at 7:30pm

Rae Dorough Speaker Series
Mike Montemerlo
GOOGLE SELF-DRIVING CAR
tuesday **jan 28** at 7:30

Free Lecture Series for Students
LLNL'S **Science on
Saturday**
**feb 1, 8, 22 &
mar 1** at 9:30 & 11:15am



Journey of Hope and Promise
Celtic Nights
tuesday **feb 4** at 7:30pm

Lamplighters Music Theatre
Die Fledermous
saturday **feb 8** at 8pm
sunday **feb 9** at 2pm

call 925.373.6800

click www.bankheadtheater.org
come by 2400 First Street / Livermore

BANKHEAD

THEATER