



THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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Edgy material and a triumphant return

By Paula Citron

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Ballet BC's Re/Naissance is a showcase for sophisticated choreography

Re/Naissance

- Ballet BC
- At the Queen Elizabeth Theatre
- In Vancouver on Thursday

Ballet BC is the proverbial phoenix rising from the ashes. In an impressive second coming, the company's relaunch features sophisticated choreography performed by a terrific group of dancers.

The concert is called Re/Naissance, and for good reason. Facing crippling debt at the end of 2008, BBC virtually closed its doors. In a stunning reversal of fortune, the company is solvent enough to actually offer a full 2010/11 season.

The choreography at this relaunch is clearly a taste of things to come. Newly appointed artistic director Emily Molnar is positioning the company to present contemporary ballet on the edge. She also comes with connections, and both William Forsythe and Crystal Pite donated their works to the cause.

Molnar has been clever in programming this all important "Re/Naissance" concert. She has chosen three works which, although they are all Vancouver premieres, have a proven track record. The pieces also make the dancers look good. In short, this show should entice audiences back into the BBC fold.

There is also good variety. Forsythe's *Herman Schmerman* (1992) is in-your-face-with-attitude dance, while Pite's *Short Works: 24* (2001) is witty and eye-catching. Both choreographers are well known and much admired.

Molnar's ace in the hole, designed to whet the appetites of Vancouver dance fans in search of new blood, is Itzik Galili's mysterious and subtle *Things I told Nobody* (2000). Born in Israel and based in the Netherlands, Galili is a star in Europe and virtually unknown on this side of the Atlantic.

With the fate of the company so iffy last year, it must be considered a miracle that Molnar has been able to regroup the BBC dancers. Of the company of 13, only three are new. The complement is rounded up to 16 with

two apprentices and guest artist Martin Lindinger, and collectively, they look very accomplished.

The dancers do need a little more sass and sex in the Forsythe piece - *Herman Schmerman* should be both cheeky and demanding. But, to give them their due, the dancers do nail the killer combinations. Pite's high energy, athletic piece, comprised of 24 vignettes ranging from solos to group ensembles, is performed with the appropriate tongue in cheek.

Galili has taken four classical music warhorses by Handel, Vivaldi, Mozart and Satie and made them seem fresh. His structure is formal - bookend solos, and a central quartet surrounded by two sets of duets. His approach is emotional interpretation expressed through movement that is supple and fluid.

The interpretation of Handel's aria *Ombra mai fù* from *Serse*, is a good example of Galili's finding the heart of the music. The section begins with one dancer dimly lit, and gradually, one by one, the lights reveal the other nine dancers. They are sitting on the floor performing movement that is filled with longing - deep back arches, enticing outstretched arms, circling heads. One feels the lament in the soul.

Welcome back, Ballet BC.

Ballet BC continues at Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Theatre through Saturday.

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