

Boston Critic Wendy Garofoli, Dancer Magazine and DancerUniverse.com
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REVIEW: Push Dance Company

This weekend, I caught the season premiere of San Francisco-based Push Dance Company, a contemporary group formed by emerging choreographer Raissa Simpson. I caught Simpson's act last year, when the company was quite green, yet still had a great deal of depth and potential. This year, their growth is apparent.

Simpson has made a name for herself as not only a fine choreographer, but as an all-around visual artist, combining film and technology seamlessly with her works. In one number, streaming sands, choreographed by Marina Fukushima, dancers mimic tiny sand particles as they're lifted and displaced by streams of water. Behind them, a projected film displays water drizzling down a sandy backdrop. The film doesn't distract from the dancers, as is often the case when multi-media pieces are presented. Instead, the dancers help to embody both the movement on the screen and the crescendos in the music.

Therein lies Simpson's huge talent: Capturing the rise and fall of musical climaxes through movement. In her final number, Post Meridian, dancers performed an exhausting piece full of energy and quick, unexpected transitions. The result was an exciting, captivating dance. Audience members were entertained, and you could tell the dancers truly enjoyed performing it as well.

Another noteworthy performance is that of guest artist Antoine Hunter, a hearing-impaired dancer who has danced with Savage Jazz Dance Company since 2001. Hunter performed a gut-wrenching solo with valleys of achingly slow, isolated movements dotted with peaks of shaking, flailing, and leaping across the stage. The contrast in his dancing had me on the edge of my seat. This man really FEELS his dancing in a way I bet those of us with perfect hearing never could. He's an inspiration to all other dancers.