

advertisement | your ad here



# THE GAMES LIVE! TONIGHT

NBCOlympics.com  
A Division of NBC Universal

home of the

Subscribe to the weekend Chronicle

SEARCH



Web Search by YAHOO! | Advanced Search

Sign In | Register

Movies Music & Nightlife Performance Art Events Books TV & Radio Horoscope Comics Games Things To Do

## Dance review: Black Choreographers Festival

advertisement | your ad here

Allan Ulrich, Chronicle Dance Correspondent  
Monday, February 22, 2010

PRINT E-MAIL SHARE COMMENTS (2)

FONT SIZE: - +

As usual, verve and vivacity drove the concert at the sixth annual Black Choreographers Festival Friday evening at the Dance Mission Theater, where a full house hollered its approval for anyone and anything that moved. The problem here wasn't so much talent, or the dearth of it, but the possible misdirection of creative gifts.

### IMAGES



BCF Photography

[View Larger Image](#)

Of the seven artists or companies participating in this oddly curated program, which continues next weekend, too many seemed to be auditioning at one of those college-circuit performing arts conferences, where everybody attempts to convince potential presenters of how sincere and "relevant" they are. Not all were capable of fusing social concerns and appealing theatricality.

If only they were all as endearing as Chloe Arnold who opened the evening by juxtaposing a vigorous reading of Maya Angelou's poem "Exceptional Women" with improvised tapping episodes. Somehow, Arnold, a class act, managed to imbue her staccato attacks with the rage simmering under the surface of the text.

The premiere of Robert Henry Johnson's "Safety of Abstraction" occupied far more stage time than any other work, which doesn't mean it was superior to its program mates. This once-precociously gifted choreographer remains an undisciplined artist, though there was a seed of an idea in this piece: The world has eased its conscience about the slave trade by objectifying it.

But how do you sustain such a conceit for a half hour? Johnson musters a few potent images: a china teacup balanced on a slave's extended leg epitomizes long-abandoned colonial attitudes. Yet, once he lays out the situation, the choreographer, with the help of four dancers and a collage score, allows it to diffuse before our eyes. Give this guy a dramaturg, please. Noted with pleasure, however: the improbably high extensions of dancer Byb Chanel Bibene.

Brevity has its virtues in long programs like this. Raissa Simpson of Push Dance Company did not outwear her welcome with "Judgments in Milliseconds." This wry study in African American identity finds the soloist cavorting in a straight-haired wig. It falls off, she dons an Afro hairpiece and contentment reigns. Marlon Sagana Ingram's projections of tonsorial instruments were an asset.

In "Resilience" from "Mudzimu," Deborah Vaughan has incorporated material from

MOST COMMENTED MOST READ MOST E-MAILED

1. Beck wants GOP to fess up like Tiger Woods
2. Daughter says pilot in Texas IRS crash was a hero
3. Has the Golden State gone bust?
4. AMERICAN SUCCESS U.S. athletes are silencing host country's boasts
5. Democrats worried about Obama track record
6. War general: gay, straight should be OK to serve
7. US jolts Canada 5-3 as Rafalski scores twice

### TopJobs

**EARLY**  
CHILDHOOD SPECIAL  
EDUCATOR - ITALY

**MANAGING**  
DIRECTOR Company  
Ganot Corp

**PROJECT**  
SR. PROJECT  
ENGINEER Company

**RESEARCH**  
ASSOCIATE Company  
Acumen, LLC

**RESIDENT**  
ENGINEERS Company  
Mendoza

**SALES**  
Company Marin Honda  
Location

**SALES**  
MANAGER Company  
Senba USA

[About Top Jobs](#)  
[View All Top Jobs](#)  
[Search more Jobs](#)

PROVIDED BY —

96Hours  
Win This!



Lombardi Sports  
Ski Giveaway

Enter now for your chance to win a Lombardi Sports Ski package valued at \$1,250.

**Ski package includes:**  
- K2 women's One Luv or men's K2 Apache Raider skis  
- Marker bindings and poles  
- A pair of Squaw Valley lift tickets

**CLICK HERE**  
for complete details!  
Contest ends March 9

Cuba and Zimbabwe into the group forays, ruggedly dispatched by members of Dimensions Dance Theater and accompanied live by an unrelenting percussion consort. More beguiling was the excerpt from Rosangela Silvestre's "Oya," restaged by Kendra Kimbrough Barnes. This Afro-Caribbean number boasted elegantly articulated unison performances from the company of eight women ablaze in crimson and wonderfully delicate contributions from percussionist Taji Maalik and vocalist Delina Patrice Brooks.

It is hard to fathom the plan behind Reginald Ray-Savage's assault on Stravinsky's "Agon," premiered last month and here given its San Francisco premiere. Even if this shimmering atonal music had not been composed expressly for George Balanchine (who was inspired to make a neo-classic masterpiece), Ray-Savage's limited modern dance vocabulary would have been woefully inadequate to the task. His five committed performers somehow locked into a rhythm, but their flailing arms couldn't begin to mirror Stravinsky's lapidary construction and impeccable organization.

**Black Choreographers Festival: Here & Now 2010:** Friday through Sunday. Dance Mission Theater, 3316 24th St., S.F. \$15-\$20. (415) 273-4633. [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com).

E-mail Allan Ulrich at [datebookletters@sfchronicle.com](mailto:datebookletters@sfchronicle.com).

This article appeared on page **E - 3** of the San Francisco Chronicle



Subscribe to the San Francisco Chronicle and get a gift:

- Sunday + a \$15 gift card
  - Fri-Sun + a \$15 gift card
  - Mon-Sun + a \$25 gift card
- Select an offer

More Articles

From SFGate.com:

- Oakland hills home offers views  
02/17/2010
- Books Inc. owners write formula for success  
02/20/2010
- Linccum, Kemp receive largest percentage raises  
02/20/2010
- Group tries to boost S.F. manufacturing  
02/18/2010
- Pa. girl's 25-year-old case lends hope to others  
02/22/2010

From Around The Web:

- Maya Angelou: Global Renaissance Woman  
02/21/2010 - 3quarksdaily.com
- Dance Review | 'Kings of the Dance': Men Dancing vs. Male Centrality  
02/22/2010 - nytimes.com
- Paul Taylor: Return of the Beloved Renegade  
02/19/2010 - nytimes.com
- Step-by-step guide to dance: National Dance Company Wales  
02/16/2010 - guardian.co.uk
- Review: Spectrum's 'China' is sound and fury - too much so  
02/19/2010 - seattletimes.nwsources.com

Powered By one spot

Related Searches: African American, Maya Angelou, Modern dance

ADVERTISEMENT

[Roots of Rock Apparel](#) ★★★★★ Shirts & more inspired by Roots of Rock  
[Free shipping on orders over \\$50](#)

PRINT E-MAIL SHARE COMMENTS (2)

(2) View Comments »

Share your thoughts on this story.

Add Your Comment

You must be signed in to add a comment. [Sign In](#) | [Register](#)

Submit

YAHOO! HOT JOBS

Your world, chronicled.  
**San Francisco Chronicle**  
SFGate.com

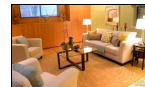
REAL ESTATE



**San Francisco Symphony early conductor's Seacliff home**  
German-born conductor Alfred Hertz owned this 3,712-square-foot home at 770 El Camino Del Mar in tony...

Fewer than 15 units left in SoMa's Infinity Mortgage relief funds headed to California Rate of borrowers behind on mortgage dips

Featured Property



8 Hill St Mill Valley, CA 94941  
MILL VALLEY  
\$1,350,000  
3 Beds, 2.1 Bath  
Morgan Lane  
More Properties

[Search Real Estate >](#)

CARS



**Temperamental Jeepster is still a jewel**  
Several of my girlfriends have referred to me as a "car guy," which is pretty accurate. In my lifetime...

GMC upgrades Acadia Denali  
Toyota upgrades Avalon for '11  
Honda aims to get Accord back on top

Featured Vehicle



2010 BMW X3  
\$47,275  
BMW of San Francisco  
Details | Similar Cars

[Search Cars >](#)

JOBS



**For hourly workers, time equals pay, happiness**  
Research from Stanford University suggests that workers who get paid by the hour are happier than...

Safeway janitors agree to tentative labor deal  
Movers and Shakers  
Buy a business and be your own boss

[Search Jobs >](#)

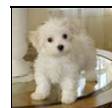
**KAANGO**  
CLASSIFIEDS



Central Park Bicycle Rentals-Tours



Nokia 5530 XpressMusic Unlocked at cellhut.com



AKC female and male maltases puppies



AKITA pup Top AKC lines registered, sweet local



**Whose homework is it anyway?**



**Physicist confirms Einstein's theory**



**Where do we learn lessons on money?**



**Goodman has lost feeling about 'Idol'**



**Outtakes: Chron photogs have a ball**

Ads by Yahoo!

**Obama Urges Homeowners to Refinance**

Rates Hit 3.62% APR! Calculate New Mortgage Payment Now.  
([www.SeeRefinanceRates.com](http://www.SeeRefinanceRates.com))

**Obama Approves Credit Card Bill**

Find Out if You Qualify For Relief.  
([www.LowerMyBills.com/Debt](http://www.LowerMyBills.com/Debt))

**Obama Backs Auto Insurance Regulation**

Drivers Pay \$44/mo on Avg for Car Insurance. Are you paying too much?  
([Auto-Insurance-Experts.com](http://Auto-Insurance-Experts.com))

**ADVERTISERS**

Hawaii Trips \$349+ 3 Nights w/Air. Pleasant Holidays.

Get the power to free yourself from debt faster