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## REVIEW:

# Fall For Dance Festival 2013 at New York City Center | Program 3

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### Program 3

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Fall for Dance's third program takes off with an American modern dance classic, visits an Irish step dancer, peaks with a world premiere by a Colombian-Belgian choreographer on a Latino dance company, and concludes with a Dutch company in a US premiere. What ties them together is a celebration of simplicity; dance does not need intricate costumes or lavish sets to capture imaginations. And the festival is glaring proof that dance can sustain its most dedicated patrons while drawing in a younger, more diverse slice of New York City's population.

A painted tableau came to life in the first moments of *The Moor's Pavane* by Jose Limon, three-dimensional figures emerging from a frieze. And for 21 minutes thereafter, the four American Ballet Theater dancers shared the onus of movement without pause. They accentuated each shape by arriving quickly to the brink of the image and then – as though their limbs were breathing – expanding it further. A pair of arms shot overhead then ballooned outward until the knees gave, shifting attention from one focal point to another but always in motion, always round, and always as though the air onstage were heavier by orders of magnitude than that beyond it.

The narrative, based on characters from Shakespeare's *Othello*, was set to Henry Purcell's Renaissance dance music. Though the movement was exquisite – especially on Julie Kent in a long white gown that set her apart from the others dressed in autumnal hues – it was the plot that drove the piece forward. The Moor's outrage was palpable as he engaged in a danced skirmish with his friend, and heightened when he turned his attention to his wife, making as if to strike her. Kent crumpled, deflated, and the Moor took her face in his hands. Now affectionate and now livid, the Moor filled the stage with a riveting tension.

Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's *Sombbreroismo* was your crush, whose presence in the room makes you feel nervous, giddy, and wildly happy with a tinge of hope. It was playful but not silly. It was sexy and masculine.

In *The Turn*, Irish step dancer Colin Dunne was accompanied by a string quartet. But really, there are five musicians onstage: the four in a semicircle off to the side played Linda Buckley's composition with bows on strings as the fifth stood on an elevated platform and made music with his feet. A simple tap tap tap of the toe became steadily more complex as heels and syncopated beats crept in. Dunne traveled to the left and right on one horizontal plane, his torso held taut while his feet flew, quite unlike the curving bodies that opened the program.

Partway through, Dunne unrolled what looked like a rug along the platform with a puff of dust and began to experiment. He not only tapped, but also scratched, brushed, swiped, and scooted, each sound reverberating as Dunn interacted with his own echoes, confounding the ephemerality of time. The whole piece felt like a glimpse into something private, a personal exploration of possibility not intended as a performance, free of conventions and stripped of all the external trappings of the genre, beautiful in its simplicity.

Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's *Sombbreroismo* was your crush, whose presence in the room makes you feel nervous, giddy, and wildly happy with a tinge of hope. It was playful but not silly. It was sexy and masculine. It was six

men onstage owning the space and choreography that pushed you to the edge of your seat with a grin spreading from ear to ear.

It started with Christopher Bloom walking onstage, a black hat in hand stretched high overhead. His movement slowed to still until five others – similarly dressed in black pants and solid button-downs in different colors – overwhelmed the stage and snapped him out of a reverie. The six stood close in a circle and each grabbed another's hat, peeling out and back in to repeat the process.

What followed was a magnetic unfurling of jumping, turning, running, and partnering in unison, in clumps, in pairs, in trios set to a combination of soundscape and music by Banda Ionica. Several times, the men put one hand to their chests, and another out to the side in a solo chacha or, all caution to the wind, a little personal boogie. These moments – along with the rib isolations and body rolls – added sensuality where virtuosity was a given.

The lighting by Joshua Preston was at once simple and brilliant – thrown here and there and casting larger than life shadows of behatted figures against a dark backdrop. In the final moment, the dancers threw their hats up high a la graduation as a bright light flashed, and froze with all limbs askance as the hats fell to the ground and the stage went black.

A Fall for Dance commission performed by Ballet Hispanico, the piece went directly to the heart of what this festival is all about and gave it a squeeze. Ochoa has made dance that will make people want to see more dance.

Introdans in *Sinfonia India* paled in comparison – both literally and figuratively. The first half of Nacho Duato's piece in particular made me feel like the color of the costumes – various shades of beige. After a bit of a thaw, there were some nice moments for five men and five women, each group in unison and then weaving through one another to form couples. A series of shifts in formation that led to the final moment made for dynamic composition. Inspired by the ritual dances of the Mexican Indians, according to program notes, Duato's work fell unusually short.

Why the program closed with *Sinfonia India* rather than *Sombrerísimo* escapes me. I wanted to walk out of the theater carrying home those butterflies in my stomach, dying to come back for more tomorrow.

#### **About author:**

Stav Ziv is a Master's student at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. She holds a B.A. in History with a minor in Dance from Stanford University, where she danced in works by Amy Seiwert, Parijat Desai, and Sophie Monat. Her writing can be found in the San Francisco Chronicle, Dance Magazine, Stanford Magazine, and The Dish Daily. // You can find Stav on Twitter here: [@sziv14](https://twitter.com/sziv14)

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