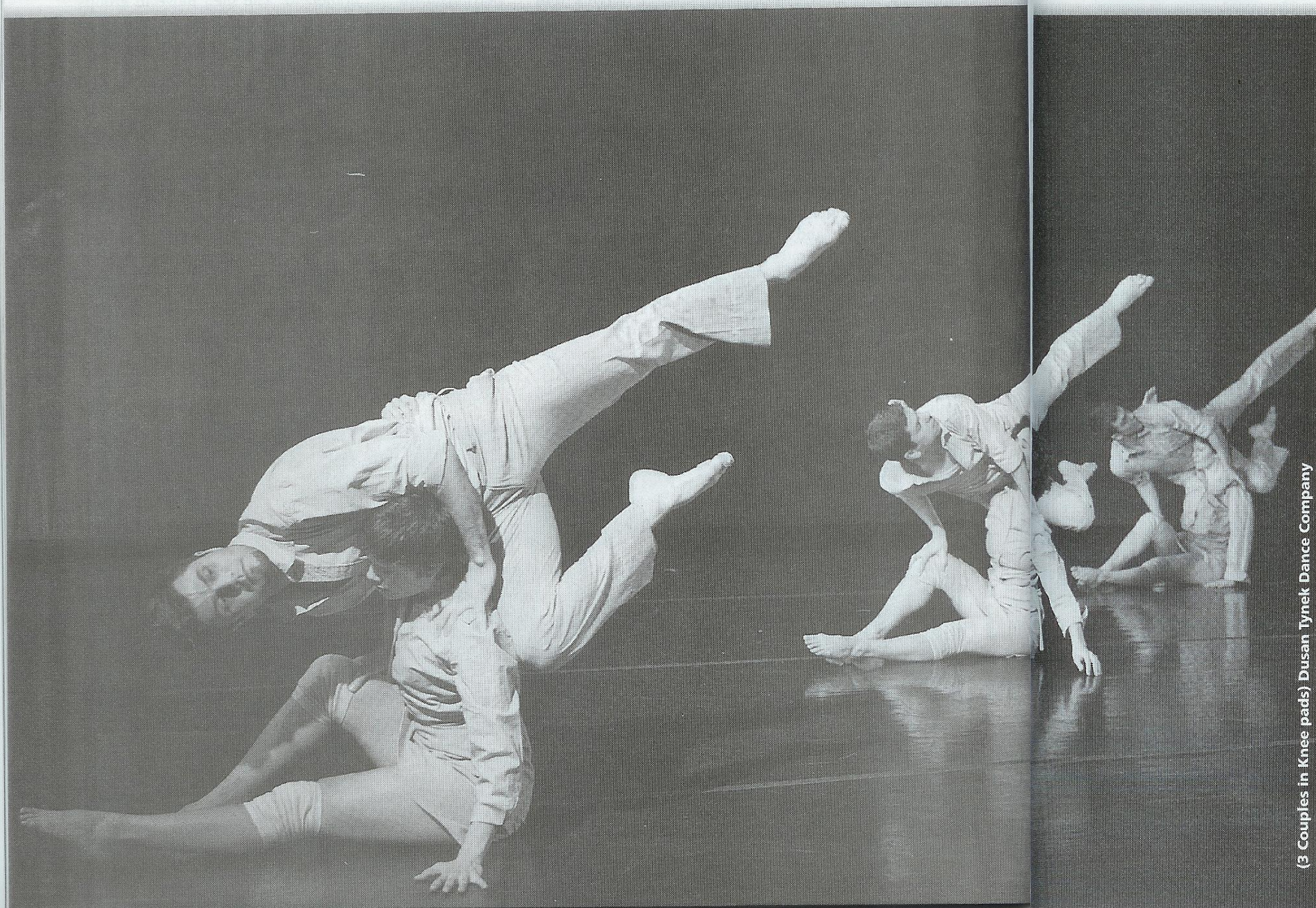


Flower Form

The lily is the overriding theme in choreographer Dušan Týnek's works, presented by 92 St. Y Harkness Dance Festival, at Ailey's new theater March 7-11th, 2007. The evening, collectively entitled String(s) Theory, features brainy movement vocabulary and costumery.

The curtain is raised with the world premiere *Fleur-de-lis*. Týnek focuses on the number three—three pairs, each body, head between two outstretched arms, and the long stem of legs together—so vulnerable and transient. For this choreographer, form is the conveyance. The dance is an offshoot of his 2004 *Trinity* inspired by



(3 Couples in Knee pads) Dusan Týnek Dance Company

Caravaggio paintings of the life of Christ. The six dancers including Týnek don't look totally comfortable with the work on opening night. It also looks underlit by designer Roderick Murray.

The women wear beige skirts and tops, and knee protectors. (There is a lot of movement close to the floor.) The beige outfits are skimpier in the second part and the third is done in nude Lycra underwear. The women, lifted, extend meandering arms and legs suggesting tendrils' necessary search for space, light, and nourishment. It's not just a pretty formation.

Part I is titled Annunciation to Biber's Gavotte/Finale from *Sonata VI*. Bodies take the fleur-de-lis shape. Part II Trinity is to the Praeludium, Aria y Variatio, and Finale from *Sonata II*. Hand to ear, while lying on the floor, the dancers could be listening for The Word. There is a buoyant male duet and same-sex partners, a choice, as there are three male and three female dancers. Part III Resurrection, to a very fast solo violin Passaglia, ends with running and chasing but never catching up.

Early baroque music by Heinrich Ignaz von Biber brings us back to the Old World. There are no frills. The movement follows the music's methodical phrasing. Windshield wiper arms count out time in one brief passage. The dance's studied innocence recalls early European dancing, court and peasant, as it looks to us today. The movement interestingly nods to the dancing of those days, while the vocabulary is decidedly contemporary. Týnek worked with Cunningham and the postmodern choreographers Lucinda Childs and Douglas Dunn, among others, and that's the pedigree that informs his original style. Bring out the lute and harpsichord. I could see this dance performed to best advantage with a live early music ensemble.

Týnek's contemporary dancers recall early concepts of the body, as in his acclaimed *The Pink Tree*, (after John Currin after Botticelli), and the totality of dance and cultural history. The artificiality is sophisticated, thought provoking, and appealing. In focusing on the forms though, I lost sight of any conclusion or point at which I could connect.

Two fully realized dances from 2006 complete the program.

Nympholepsy is an excerpt from *ScEnNes*. It is subtitled A Solo for Six. Six in red voluminous skirts dance to an excellent score of music by Michael Galasso. The title and subtitle reflect its touch of irreverence—all seamlessly gather under one skirt, raising her to great height and girth. Elsewhere, two trios travel, one dragging the central figure and the other pushing its middle member out toward the wings. The unpredictable asymmetry intrigues. Shen Wei's dancers dragged on the tails of long dresses but Týnek's dance is more intimate than it is imperious. This young Czech born choreographer who started his company just five years ago expresses homegrown humility.

Košile is inspired by Czech fables about village life. It is beautifully performed to a medley of twelve musical selections that range from Paganini to Moondog, and ending with bells in a Monk's Mass. *Košile* is Czech for shirt and eight including Týnek make knots and straps with the T shaped white shirt/jackets, or woosh them in a kind of scarf dance.

The dancers' bare feet add to the overall *a la terre*, though that is pierced with uplifting moments of buoyancy. Loose and natural looking, Ann Chiaverini's expansiveness drew my eye, shedding some essential light on Týnek's innovative style. In an exceptional duet, she and Nicholas Duran play a close tug of war with a shirt, creating captivating moments in which the suspense and drama are palpable.

Lilies figure again, this time the real deals are delightful props, held between the woman's teeth. The men symbolically deflower the women. The flower motif threads the evening, into a unified choreography. Even *Nympholepsy's* bell shaped skirts recall flower forms.

Týnek's Old World sensibility feels refreshing and different as it's presented in our fast-paced urban environment. I liked the coherence of the evening though *Fleur-de-lis* has yet to come alive.

Alexandra Berger, Matthew Dailey, Eden Mazur, Elisa Osborne, Týnek, and Aaron Walter complete the cast and Karen Young is credited with the wonderful costumes.

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