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DANCE REVIEW

## The Sea That Gives, and Takes Away

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Andrea Mohin/The New York Times

Dusan Tynek Dance Theater Members of this eight-person ensemble in Mr. Tynek's "Middlegame," at the TriBeCa Performing Arts Center.

It is a sign of the skill, range and taste of the Czech-born choreographer Dusan Tynek that a new dance of his will often recall the work of a great choreographer, a different one each time. That same trait is what keeps Mr. Tynek from advancing out of the artistic category of promising. The first section of his new "Widow's Walk," performed on Friday as part of his company's two-week season at the TriBeCa Performing Arts Center, could have been made by Martha Graham.

"Widow's Walk" takes its title from an architectural feature of old New England houses, a rectangular rooftop platform from which the wives of sailors were said to look out for their husbands, returning home from sea. The four women who begin (and end) the dance walk in a rectangle with a lunging, shuffling step, a hieratic gesture that speaks of forbearance. Occasionally, they pause to look skyward.

After the men join them for a frolic, the scene shifts to the sea. In a resonant bit of the double casting necessary for a troupe of modest means, the wives return in bathing caps, bounding across the stage and windmilling their arms like Furies in the guise of Esther Williams. They are the ocean that steals their men. Entering and exiting in a swirl, they are also another example of Mr. Tynek's ability to make a company of eight appear larger.

If the dance as a whole ends up feeling small, a well-made miniature, it was preferable to the drawn-out tedium of "Middlegame," his 2010 work that opened the program. Here the model seems to be Pina Bausch, but Mr. Tynek's choreographic chess game of male-and-female relations strains for theatrical effect. It's strongest when most contained, particularly in a section in which four dancers, swapping places on closely facing chairs, weave an intricate dance design to breakneck Gypsy music.

The evening's best work was its oldest, "Fleur-de-lis," from 2007. Set to Baroque music by Heinrich von Biber, this one suggests Paul Taylor. Its introductory moments — women walking with their eyes closed, men shielding and embracing them — are evocative enough that you wonder what happened before the dance started. The rest of it is a beautiful abstraction of religious imagery, rich in cantilevered balances. The transition into the final "Resurrection" segment turns the act of sleeping into dance with uncommon poetry.

At several points "Fleur-de-lis" attends to the music's slower, harmonic rhythm, stopping in poses as the melody runs quick. The effect is that of locks in a powerful river, channeling its flow.

Mr. Tynek's musicality was especially clear in "Fleur-de-lis" on Friday night, because the music for that piece alone was live. (It was performed by Leah Gale Nelson on baroque violin, Bradley Brookshire on organ and Charles Weaver on an exotic-looking theorbo.) With the help of good musicians, Mr. Tynek's work breathes. I look forward to Thursday night, when the string quartet Ethel will join the company for another premiere.

*Dusan Tynek Dance Theater performs through Saturday at TriBeCa Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers Street, near Greenwich Street; (212) 220-1460, [tribecapac.org](http://tribecapac.org).*