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SURPRISES

## New Life Can Arise in Old Happy Endings

By JENNIFER DUNNING

ANOTHER night, another “Swan Lake” or “Revelations.” Another trip to a downtown theater to see work by yet another new choreographer. The thrill should be gone. But no performance of a dance work is ever quite the same as any other, and even the greenest of choreographic tykes tend to have something of their own to say. **Here are five of the year’s contributors of illuminating wonder.**

1. Linda Celeste Sims, who joined the [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#) in 1996, has come to the fore in its current season at City Center in performances of unexpected lushness and delicacy. Movement and its impulse seem to continue out into space when Ms. Sims dances, her body seeming boneless, her torso opening to the skies and her individual style imbued not just with the thrust of modern dance but also with the detail and manners of classical ballet.
2. The horror of Hurricane Katrina was addressed, unusually, in “Place Matters: A Look at Displacement,” a workshop production by the Urban Bush Women 2006 Summer Institute in July at the Kumble Theater on the Brooklyn campus of [Long Island University](#). The institute, which recently relocated to New York from Florida, offers participants from around the world a chance to make theater drawn from explorations of social issues of the time. “Place Matters,” directed by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, combined movement, music and the spoken word to evoke that horror shockingly but with flashes of poignant, gutsy humor.
3. The forthrightness of Dusan Tynek’s choreography in a performance by his company at [Dance Theater Workshop](#) in July brought [Mark Morris](#) to mind. But Mr. Tynek’s powerful “Kosile,” inspired by a collection of ballads by the 19th-century Czech poet Karel Jaromir Erben, created and inhabited a dark yet almost funny world of its own, in a shifting field of men in white wedding shirts and women passing red lilies from mouth to mouth.
4. Another season by the [Paul Taylor Dance Company](#), in March at City Center, with more daredevil performing by dancers with strong individual presences and more lyrical, magisterial and slyly comical choreography by Mr. Taylor. But suddenly his airy, sweet-natured new “Spring Rounds” made me glad he is such an unassuming humanist. And the simple wordless majesty of the dance and dancers in his 1988 “Brandenburgs” reminded me of my childhood wonder at the enveloping power of the art.
5. And another tour by another threadbare, dollar-hungry Russian ballet pickup group. But this time, in March, the company was the oddly named [Tchaikovsky Ballet and Orchestra](#), and the performing was magical. It is no small feat, especially with minimal scenic effects on a pocket-handkerchief stage like that of the Lehman Center in the Bronx, to mesmerize audiences to the point where cheers erupt when Petipa’s handsome Prince kisses awake the Sleeping Beauty. Drawn from the much-admired Perm school and company in Russia, the troupe brought glowing new life to “Swan Lake” as well as “The Sleeping Beauty” in its East Coast debut performances.