



BWW Reviews: TAKE DANCE Delights Fans with World Premieres at Symphony Space

by Sondra Forsyth

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Long celebrated for his unique brand of contemporary choreography that combines powerful athleticism with profound emotional sensitivity, Takehiro (Take) Ueyama did not disappoint his opening night audience on Friday, September 27th at Peter Norton Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th Street. The program, which was repeated on September 28th, treated Take's fans to the world premiere of his "Dark Mourning" as well as the world premiere of Kazuko Hirabayashi's "A Baited Soul". The closing piece was a favorite staple of Take's repertoire, his critically acclaimed "Flight".

"Dark Mourning," set to Early Music (*Lachrymæ Antiquæ*) by Kronos Quartet, was clearly an expression of the contradictory welter of emotions that comprise the universal human experience of grief. The seven dancers in the cast were at times unutterably sad, and at others frightened or just plain lonely or even oddly joyous. Like all of the

members of Take Dance, they are superbly trained and also artistically mature so that even the most demanding movements and lifts appeared deceptively simple. That effect allowed the spellbound spectators to focus on the content rather than the technique, which is a tribute to Take's gift for using dance a medium of communication.

The Hirabayashi premiere, a duet for Take and Assistant Director Jill Echo, featured a large parasol that alternately hid and revealed the dancers while they evolved from a courteous relationship to a stormy one. The choreography, based on the Japanese ghost story "Tales of Moonlight and Rain" by Shusei Ueda, was danced to the haunting strains of Teizo Matsumura's "Poeme II". Adding to the otherworldly ambience, wafts of smoke drifted overhead and a performer in black (Anthony Aiu) appeared and disappeared with ritualistic strides as a sort of supernatural prop master. The piece was superbly performed by the two former members of the Paul Taylor Dance Company who now direct Take Dance.

"Flight" is beloved for many reasons, not the least of which is the impeccably rehearsed large group of dancers. They perform intricate and unconventional movements with precision worthy of a corps de ballet. Even more important, however, is the fact that they did indeed convey the sense that they were flock of birds, which was Take's intent. He has said that starlings "playing in the sky in Rome" gave him the idea for the dance, which is accompanied by a montage of musical selections by Ana Milosavljevic, Aleksandra Vrebalov, and Philip Glass. Take has been quoted as saying, "I find that nature inspires me most and that is what I try to capture in my work." He certainly succeeded with "Flight."

Next up for Take Dance is "Dancers Responding to AIDS, Dance from the Heart" at Cedar Lake Theater, 547 West 26th Street, on January 29th 2014. Mark your calendar and don't miss the opportunity to see this remarkable company in action!

Kile Hotchkiss (Photo © 'M' Apisak Vithyanond)