



31st Annual Choreographers Showcase at Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

by Rick Westerkamp on January 29, 2014

Below review has been excerpted from full article (available at the link listed above).

The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center hosted the **31st Annual Choreographers' Showcase** this past weekend. The program

welcomed seven modern dance works, which were all adjudicated

by Sidra Bell and Zvi Gotheiner; both internationally acclaimed artists with ties to the New York dance scene. As the showcase unfolded, I saw a number of commonalities in the various works, such as inaudible text, pedestrian clothing, and minimalist sound scores. These commonalities didn't deter me, but rather strike me as interesting "fads" in the work of this time, and I wonder what dance historians will say about this time years from now.

The showcase ended with the most dynamic and thrilling piece of the evening by far, *Benchmarks*, choreographed by Adrienne Clancy and performed by Jessica Ellis, Jason Fowler, Mao Hamada, Natalia Pinzon, Jade Treadwell *(adjustments were made to the cast, but there was no paperwork for the audience to know which dancers were added/subtracted, so some of these dancers may not have performed). The dancers' calm intensity in performing Clancy's acrobatic and daring choreography was absolutely breathtaking to behold. The agility with which the dancers of disparate heights performed the same floor work in unison was also a testament to both the strength of the choreography and performances. The partner work was nothing if not efficient, in the way two dancers manipulated a bench with a dancer perched precariously on it and the way they manipulated each other. The unison section toward the end of the piece, with one dancer per bench, was effective, precise, and thrilling. Clancy spoke eloquently in the talkback about how she likes a sense of suspense and thrill in live performance, which is communicated effortlessly in this work. She said that she sees herself as Disney when it comes to her choreography, and that she likes to have something for everyone in the choreography. Younger audience members and those looking to be entertained can take in the splendor of the tricks with the benches, and other audience members can read into the meaning of various moments with the dancers and the benches. This piece was by far the standout of the evening; in its meticulous precision, the dancers' execution, and reception by the audience.

The 31st Annual Choreographers' Showcase was an evening of inspired dance works by a number of truly engaging artists. This year's showcase was on the moodier side of modern dance, with a leaning toward the more psychological works. I wonder if, in the future, the overall evening of work presented could be taken into consideration, so there is a wider variety of tone and theme to the evening. A few more dynamic pieces would have made for a more balanced program.

The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center is located at Stadium Drive & University Boulevard, in College Park, MD. Check out [their website](#) for their upcoming performance.