

ADF REVIEW: LIMÓN DANCE COMPANY

Flex and disconnect in a divine comedy of the spirit

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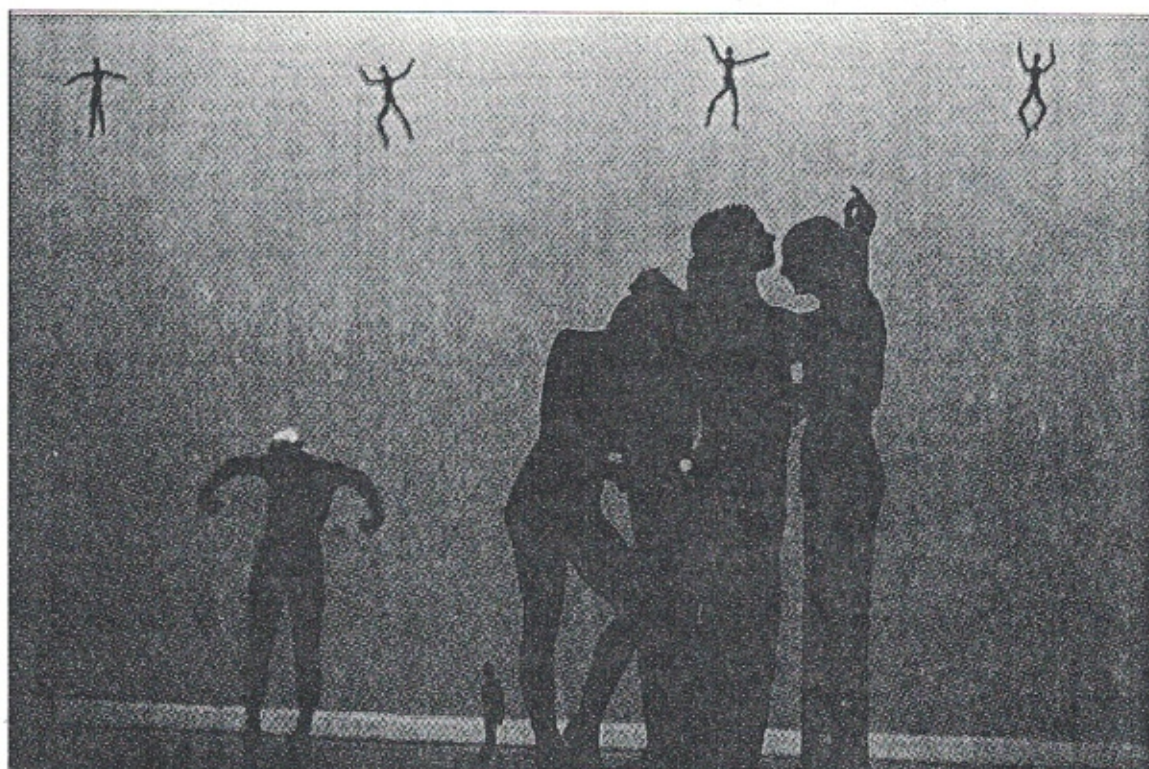
DURHAM

As performed by the Limón Dance Company, choreographer Mark Haim's "Anatomy of Intent" is a calculated, subtle and thought-provoking critique of pure movement and, in places, reason.

In the world premiere of its final version Thursday night in Page Auditorium at the American Dance Festival, Haim repeatedly juxtaposed exquisitely crafted but motionally null solos and group sequences with a handful of comparatively simpler moments of human revelation: The remarkable discovery of flex, in an arm or hand that hurts no longer; the body — and the person living in it — seen both in and out of the context of a world of relationships and friends.

At times a series of simply sculpted human miniatures, made of wire, appear upstage from the stage — and arid — motion studies we encounter. A man and woman share the first one, framed onstage as in a motion picture, but at a pace at most is all they share; with no shared context, we sense they could as easily be dancing in different buildings. In places, abstract group sequences seem a celebration of movement for movement's sake; elsewhere, we learn that something's missing in the picture.

The human disconnect is dealt with humorously in places: A quartet pointedly loses all lyricism when one of the four dons a portable CD player in mid-sequence and begins to boogie to unheard classic rhythm and blues. Elsewhere, a couple looks on in mock concern as dancer Carlos Orta breaks without warning into sudden abstract movement at dangerously close proximity. Orta's look of self-satisfaction is capped by the arrogance with which he tosses his warmup togs at the couple before starting a second set of movements, identical to the first.



Limón Dance Company brings 'Anatomy of Intent' to a close; at right are Carlos Orta and Natalie Desch.

STAFF PHOTOS BY SCOTT LEWIS

Elsewhere, distance abets abstraction, in sections where one dancer observes a trio or quartet, but never can enter their world. Since Haim has been particularly celebrated for his previous solo compositions (including 1997's "Goldberg Variations"), it bears noting that his strongest moments in this work are still in solos: by Orta, Natalie Desch and Amber Merkens.

To composer Michael Grigsby's arpeggiated, crystalline piano tonics, dancers contrast similarly pristine — but inert, nearly robotic — physical performances with the discovery of grace in hand and arm, at the very end. In the final sequence, the two dancers at the start repeat their perfect and airless sequence — with a telling



difference. At its end, they see friends in the wings, offstage. They smile. Their bodies relax, and in a moment, take on a context that previously had been stripped away. It's clear that one is preferable to the other. It's one thing to reduce humans to little motion studies; it's quite another to get at the ghost, the soul within these strangest, fragile figurines

WHAT

Limón Dance Company performance at the American Dance Festival; discussion after the performance. Kids night out; ages 6-16 get a free ticket with the purchase of an adult ticket.

WHEN

Tonight, 8.

WHERE

Page Auditorium, Duke University, Durham.

TICKETS

\$17-\$34.

CALL

684-4444, www.AmericanDanceFestival.org