

Ballet BC's No. 29 opens the 14/15 season with superb dancing



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An Instant. Choreography / Lesley Telford. Dancers / Andrew Bartee, Rachel Meyer, Nicholas Bellefleur, Scott Fowler. Photo: Michael Slobodian

Ballet BC, under the artistic leadership of Emily Molnar, celebrated their 29th year and 29 commissions of world premieres with an evening of superb dancing and some drop dead fine choreography. *No. 29* plays the Queen Elizabeth Theatre till Saturday night.

No. 29 features the World Premiere of *White Act* by Spanish-born choreographer Fernando Hernando Magadan, the Ballet BC premiere of *An Instant* by Vancouver-born choreographer Lesley Telford and the reprisal of the explosive audience favourite *A.U.R.A.* by Italy's Jacopo Godani.

A.U.R.A. (Anarchist Unit Related to Art) by Godani knocks the socks off the audience with an intense undulating pit of unbelievable dancing and brilliant artistic vision. Godani's movement vocabulary is truly unique with the dancers spines and joints seemingly without ligaments or tendons holding them together. Every movement sequences through the spine and responds through limbs with a kind of seaweed-like ripple.

In this dystopian universe individuals, couples, quartets and groups feel trapped under lights, also designed by Godani, that shift like a Hunger Games reality morph. Godani also designed the costumes rendering 15 members of the company androgynous bits of sinew and fury. The score by 48nord, a German electro acoustic experimental group with international standing, relentlessly drives the dancers. Standouts were Scott Fowler for his ability to tell a story with quicksilver dynamic shifts and balances and Alexis Fletcher for her juxtaposition of articulated lines like shapes put through a pencil sharpener and a gorgeous jointless flow. Outstanding.

The world premiere of Spaniard Fernando Hernando Magadan *White Act* is inspired by *La Sylphide*, a Romantic Ballet featuring all the tenants of Romanticism: unearthly creatures in a dream, high emotion and pastoral settings in nature. Magadan has taken the ballet and deconstructed it somewhat but intention is not totally clear.

Beginning with the curtains closed and fog rolling off the front of the stage, as the curtain opens, we see a narrow, vertical image of a path in the forest on the back of the stage. The men, led beautifully by Ballet BC newcomer Christoph von Riedmann, are the woodsmen and the women, the sylphs who bourée across the stage en pointe. A Romantic tutu appears on one ballerina at the end satisfying the audience members who enjoy such things. At times, it seemed like Magadan was pushing the boundaries into comedy making comment on the over the top emotionalism of the era. Was this a loving yet satirical comment that didn't go far enough or was it a straight homage to a great ballet?



Vancouver-born choreographer and dancer Lesley Telford's *An Instant* is based on Wislawa Szymborska's poem *Could Have* heard during the piece recited by Amos Ben Tal . The most modern aesthetic of the night, with close to the ground choreography, weight sharing duets, relaxed arms and hands and fall and recovery motion, the movement had a Pina Bausch-like aesthetic.

Beautifully costumed by Kate Burrows with gorgeous lighting by James Proudfoot, the dancers tell their stories of isolation with artistry. Rachel Meyer and Emily Chessa, in particular, use their bodies with abandon to share their inner voices. A fabulous end to the dance leaves the audience with a lovely parting memory. [Read More:](#)