

DANCE REVIEW

# Boston Contemporary Dance Festival shows range



MICKEY WEST

Timothy Edwards and Maleek Washington in “Turf,” a duet excerpted from Camille A. Brown’s “ink.”

By **Karen Campbell** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT AUGUST 12, 2018

Boy oh boy, Urbanity Dance sure knows how to pack ‘em in. Since 2012, the company has brought together an array of contemporary dance artists from around the country for a lively summer showcase, and this year’s festival featured two different performances and more than 30 companies/artists (out of 90 applicants). While the afternoon show focused on local artists, the evening performance was more wide-ranging, with one company from the Dominican Republic.

Engaging, smoothly run, and impressively performed, the program ranged from ballet to post-modern. With 14 different companies, pieces were on the short side and some had an unfinished feel — they took their stylistic stand but didn’t develop into satisfyingly cohesive works with a point to make, whether a compelling context or movement that really captivated the eye.

However, there were some terrific standouts, especially two works by the event’s guest headliner, Camille A. Brown. Two of the award-winning choreographer’s dancers — Timothy Edwards and Maleek Washington — gave a spectacular performance of “Turf,” a powerful eye-popping duet excerpted from “ink,” the final installment of Brown’s identity trilogy. Like a pair of street kids trying out personas, they spooled through a range of semaphore-like gestures. One

moment they were awestruck adolescents, captivated by something just beyond reach, jumping, pointing, and waving. The next they were tough street thugs, full of macho swagger and bravado. It's all very playful — until it's not. After taking it on the chin, they reel and cower, and the work takes a brief turn toward a darker reality as they wander off their separate ways.

For the evening's finale, Urbanity Dance gave a committed, spirited performance of Brown's New Orleans-inspired "New Second Line," bringing jazzy, feel-good pizzazz and vivid technical flair to the choreographer's raucous party. In between, notable performances included Levi Philip Marsman, who seemed to be wrestling with some inner turmoil in a muscular solo of stretches, contortions, and falls, a hand clasped to the heart or arms reaching up to the heavens. Jaclyn Walsh and Brandon Koepsell were charmingly personable and articulate in the playful "Cheek to Cheek." Alexander Duval and Allison Garcia of Ballet Clásico Alina Abreu imparted lyrical sweep to Duval's romantic "Decomposition," full of breathy lifts and sweeping turns. Garcia unleashed sharp fouettés and pirouettes en pointe.

Monica Gonzalez and Jared McAboy rippled through luxurious exchanges of weight in Robert Mark Burke's "interwoven shadow," and Elscó Dance's push-pull duet mined the jagged shapes in thrown energy. LV Dance Collective effectively played off the uneven dynamic of a threesome. While a septet by Ariel Rivka Dance explored the layered architecture of shifting lines and phalanxes among the dancers, Withjoydance's eight performers lived up to the company name, creating a lively communal celebration.

## **BOSTON CONTEMPORARY DANCE FESTIVAL**

At Huntington Avenue Theatre, Saturday

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