

iMEE Reviews for PROGRAM I: World Premiere Performances

Infinite Movement Ever Evolving at the Lobero Theatre

S.B.'s Newest Dance Company Comes Out Strong

Monday, June 15, 2009

By Elizabeth Schwyzer - *The Santa Barbara Independent*

Despite a poor turnout for the opening night of their premiere, Santa Barbara's newest dance company, Infinite Movement Ever Evolving (IMEE) hit the Lobero's stage with passion and professionalism this past Friday night, giving the kind of polished performance worthy of a much bigger audience. Ex-State Street Ballet dancers Spencer Gavin Hering and Andrea Dawn Shelley were taking a risk in booking the 650-seat house for their first show, but the quality of dancing they presented Friday night went a long way toward justifying their choice.

Hering and Shelley performed in their own work alongside a stellar cast of dancers: Edgar Anido, Erica de la O, Adam Hundt, Paola Georgudis, Cristian Laverde König, and Lindsey McGill, all of whom flew to town especially for the production.

The show opened with "Son of Dust," Shelley's narrative ballet based on the story of the fallen angel, which featured her as evil temptress and König as the heavenly creature fallen from grace. The biblical readings presented in a creepy, electronically distorted voice were unnecessary, but the dancing was luscious.

Next came Hering's "Dichotomy," a slick, riveting duet for Georgudis and McGill in which the two women moved in canon, acting and reacting with precision timing, slithering and swiveling past one another against a soundscape of synthetic beeps and chirps. Their arms fluttered out from their shoulders like tassels, flapped bird-like, and folded into quaint gestures with the mechanical quality of store mannequins brought to life.

Shelley's "Ivonic" took cancer as its subject, making the disease the invisible yet driving force in the struggle between two characters. In her subtly humorous quintet "Unbeknownst," Shelley gave five dancers in tunics and coattails a chance to show off their stunning technique, as well as to play — vigorously enough that one dancer lost her tutu.

Post-intermission, the musicians of Bay Area-based [Judgment Day](#) took the stage for some hard-core cello and violin, setting the stage for Hering's ambitious "Dr. Developmental 5.0," in which a mad scientist of a dance company director attempted to program his robot-dancers, using a remote control to stop and start their action. "Dancers need space and time and the leeway to do what they choose with those things," the amplified inner voice of the doctor mused before tethering his charges to an electrically charged ballet barre.

Hering's "Again" showcased Georgudis and Anido in a duet full of smooth lifts and unexpected changes of direction, and the show closed with "Collaboration," in which the entire cast returned to the stage alongside the musicians, concluding with an abrupt, comic finale.

With their debut production, IMEE proved their commitment to new choreography as well as their ability to bring some serious performing talent to town. Their next great challenge? Filling the house.

Dancing at the Lobero

June 18-25, 2009 Vol. 15 Issue 24

By Richard Mineards *The Montecito Journal*

For innovation and inspiration it would have been hard to beat the World Premiere works of choreographer Spencer Gavin at the Lobero Theatre on Saturday.

Gavin, 32, and his girlfriend, Andrea Dawn Shelley, former performers with State Street Ballet, put on an exciting and almost ethereal show with "Infinite Movement Ever Evolving," involving six professional dancers - Edgar Anido, Erica De la o, Adam Hundt, Paola Georgudis, Cristian Laverde Konig and Lindsey McGill.

Their nine days of solid rehearsal last month, for which they flew specially to Santa Barbara paid off with a most entertaining selection of numbers, many of which stood out for the sheer originality and exuberance.

Shelley's "Unbeknownst" to music by Tchaikovsky, and Gavin's "Set Up" and hip - hop inspired "Dr. Developmental 5.0" were of particular note, with "Collaboration," featuring all the dancers and "Hall of the Mountain King" music from Grieg's Peer Gent Suite, being a most impressive finale.

Oakland - based instrumental rock band Judgement Day, with brothers Anton Partner on violin and Lewis Partner on cello, definitely added to the performance panache with music as frenetic and entertaining as the dance. A bravura performance indeed...



MONTECITO JOURNAL

Program II: Verbal Interludes

iMEE: Infinite Movement Ever Evolving @ The Lobero

June 11, 2010

Posted by Erin J. Smith *CASA Magazine*

Through the innovative collaboration of artistic mediums, the artists who make up Infinite Movement Ever Evolving (iMEE) remind us that violins can dance, sculptures can breathe, and dancers can speak.

Under the artistic direction of ex-State Street Ballet dancers Spencer Gavin Hering and Andrea Dawn Shelley, the interdisciplinary group of artists drew on their collective talents for iMEE's second Santa Barbara showing during two performances at the Lobero on June 4th and 5th.

Entitled *Program II: "Verbal Interludes"*, the performance was true to its name with eight distinct main pieces linked together through verbal and musical interludes. With violin in hand, theatrical artist and gifted musician Graham Patzner served as a guide between the *us* and the *them*, linking the audience to the dancers through poetry, spoken word, music, and song, much like a barefoot troubadour – part clown and part maestro.

The ambitious program included several Santa Barbara premieres as well as a few fan favorites, such as *Ivonic* and *Dichotomy*. In *4Ward & 4Gotten*, a quartet of dancers explored our complex relationship to friends and family – the support they offer sometimes helpful and other times confining. *Frozen Angels* followed as a pas de deux danced to the Pablo Neruda poem "I Like For You To Be Still" with dancers refusing to be so.

Following intermission, the curtain raised on *Acquiescence*, which featured a looming, open steel box, crisscrossed with white, spider web-like threads. Although striking, the sheer size of it competed with the dancers, who, as a

trio were engaging on their own; Paola Georgudis particularly so, given her strength and dynamic flair.

In keeping with the interdisciplinary approach, *Interludium* captured the iMEE dancers on film in a light and fun improv game of ‘tag you’re it’ while *La Follias’ Folie* featured the work of guest choreographer Jerry Opdenaker. Patzner, acting as ballet master, conducted the dancers in an exuberant, mini-ballet performed beautifully beneath a series of serpentine shapes suspended from the rafters. *Conglomerate* brought the performance to a close, punctuating the performance with a final statement of iMEE’s artistic vision: “*We, as a whole, keep the art of dance alive. Breathe the breath of dance and keep evolving and growing with us... Infinite Movement Ever Evolving.*”

If you missed the show, check out iMEE on YouTube or visit www.infinitemoves.com. Or, better yet, look out for iMEE the next time they’re in town and get tickets to the show!



HAVE VISION, WILL DANCE

The new and brilliant dance company, Infinite Movement Ever Evolving (iMEE) wants to call Santa Barbara home, but is anybody watching?

June 9, 2010

By Daniel Kepl *Santa Barbara News-Press*

Infinite Movement Ever Evolving Founding Artistic Director/artist Spencer Gavin Hering is way ahead of the madding crowd. He has a novel idea: why not motivate whole communities to chose to experience the art of dance by presenting performances that focus on excellence, while also challenging and stimulating intellect. Good grief, trick lemmings (the increasingly dumbed-down American public) into thinking, while also entertaining them? The man must be out of his mind.

An audience swallowed in the emptiness of a not-so-very-big Lobero Theatre on Friday night, had made the right choice: iMEE is one of the best dance companies to perform in town this season (and that's a very high compliment indeed), and gave those present a stunning multimedia show that both dazzled the eye and massaged the cerebrum. It felt really good.

In a program that included the spoken word (holy hijinks Batman, is that allowed in dance?) and featured a work presented entirely on film, California's newest professional dance company entertained all right. A mixed-media show titled, succinctly, "Program II: Verbal Interludes," cohered around composer/reciter/ring-master/artist/musician Graham Patzner, enjoyed simple yet fascinating lighting design by Houston-based Jeremy Choate, and morphed musically around the cutting edge

sounds of the Kronos Quartet, Philip Glass and other contemporary composers, in tandem with some older guys; Vivaldi, Bach & Beethoven.

iMEE is a company of six, including Mr. Hering and Founding Associate Artistic Director/artist Andrea Dawn Shelley. All the dancers are equals at the highest level of professional virtuosity, which fact alone should have drawn the State Street Ballet crowd and/or UCSB Dance Department faculty and students. The paucity of the audience was a shame, considering the tremendous talent on display Friday night.

“4Ward & 4Gotten,” a piece created by Mr. Hering, to the music of the Kronos Quartet and Wendy Sutter with a pastiche of “verbal interludes” nicely recited by the barefoot Mr. Patzner- dressed in fetching white tailcoat and white pants- opened the program and introduced four members of the company. Immediately establishing a high standard of contemporary choreographic movement- and not inconsequentially conveying that these dancers are cosmopolites all- Cristian Laverde Koenig, Lindsey McGill, Mikhael Plain and Andrea Dawn Shelley, made clear their expert training and professional dance affiliations with intelligent attention to choreographic detail.

Ms. Shelley’s choreography for “Frozen Angels,” which followed an original violin solo by Graham Patzner (among a cluster of offerings throughout the evening by this multi-talented artistic polyglot), featured Ms. McGill and Mr. Plain in an exquisitely sensual pas de deux to Pablo Neruda’s “I Like For You To Be Still,” tastefully spoken by Mr. Patzner.

Another work of Shelley’s, “Ivonic,” found the two artistic directors dancing in tandem perfection to music of Philip Glass. Mr. Hering’s “Dichotomy,” to music mostly by Vivaldi- one of his many operatic arias for castrato tweaked rhythmically by

contemporary composer Emmanuel Santarromana- was a virtuosic male pas de deux, featuring Mr. Koenig and Mr. Plain.

Ms. Shelley's, "Acquiescence" opened the second half of the program and introduced Paola Georgudis as the feminine sensibility in a triad that included Mr. Hering & Mr. Koenig, to the music of Beethoven- the slow movement to the "Erioca" Symphony- the three interacting with an intriguingly lit webbed cube, its interior labyrinth morphed throughout the piece by Mr. Choate's consistently stunning lighting design.

Jerry Opdenaker's choreography for "La Follias' Folie" to music of Vivaldi followed a cleverly filmed piece, "Interludium," featuring the entire company, choreographed by Mr. Hering.

The entire company, in the flesh and in classic ballet mode, performed Mr. Hering's "Conglomerate" as program finale in confirmation, if such were needed, of their splendid training, Santa Barbara is a tough town in which to make a viable artistic life, but if we can snag this company, we'll have it all!



Infinite Movement Ever Evolving Returns to SB

A Review of the Company's Second Lobero Performance

Wednesday, June 9, 2010

By Elizabeth Schwyzer *The Santa Barbara Independent*

A single helix of bulbous green nodules descends from the ceiling downstage right, and a giant silver disk hangs upstage, pockmarked like the surface of the moon. Into this strange landscape walks a young man in a white tuxedo, his feet bare, his thick, curly hair forming a nimbus around his head. He launches into a dramatic monologue about past mistakes, wandering the stage as he speaks and punctuating his phrases with twitching gestures.

So begins “4ward & 4gotten,” the opening number in an evening-length program of dance, film, spoken word, and live music from Infinite Movement Ever Evolving (iMEE). Last in Santa Barbara for their premiere one year ago, the young company of dancers drawn from across the nation was back last weekend with new works by artistic directors Spencer Gavin Hering and Andrea Dawn Shelley. The aims of iMEE are to transcend the boundaries between art forms through artistic collaboration, a commitment made evident in this show by the role of actor and musician Graham Patzner. Whether reciting poetry, creating looped scores on the electric violin, or simply standing on stage as the dancers moved around him, Patzner provided the through-line to a varied program.

From the moment four dancers swept onstage for a fiercely articulated movement sequence to the virtuoso solos that marked the evening's closing number “Conglomerate,” iMEE's high-octane performers displayed exquisite skill. Lindsey McGill threw off triple pirouettes with enviable nonchalance; Shelley's battements lingered above her head before floating back to earth.

The company's movement vocabulary is characterized by busy, frenetic gestures and ballet-driven technique, and every dancer is up to the task. Though pieces like Shelley's "Acquiescence" and "Frozen Angels" are intended as dramatic narratives, the real drama was in the sheer physical prowess of the performance. Male dancers Cristian Laverde Koenig and Mikhael Plain shared an exciting duet of swinging weight shifts and achingly graceful extensions; Hering and Shelley revisited last year's "Ivonic," set to a fast-paced score by Philip Glass.

This program also included work by guest choreographer Jerry Opdenaker, whose "La Follias' Folie" brought to life the music of Antonio Vivaldi. In knee-length velvet pantaloons and black corsets, the dancers bounded through themes and variations, bouncing and bobbing like sprightly court jesters, their animated expressions conveying pure enjoyment.

As their name suggests, iMEE's artistic vision is still evolving, but with dancers of this caliber, they're on the right track. If you missed this show, you've got another chance to catch them back at the Lobero July 9 and 10.

Santa Barbara
Independent
WHO. WHAT. NOW.

iMEE at the Lobero

June 17, 2010

By Richard Mineards – Montecito Journal

Infinite Movement Ever Evolving, the contemporary company founded by former State Street Ballet dancers, **Spencer Gavin Hering & Andrea Dawn Shelley**, just gets better and better.

I first saw the dancers in their debut at the Lobero last year and this year's performance "Program II: Verbal Interludes" at the same venue, continued to impress with its choreography, lighting and innovation.

San Francisco actor-musician **Graham Patzner**, dressed in an all white tailcoat outfit, glued the show together with his narration and electronic violin playing, while Texan **Jeremy Choate's** haunting lighting on the stark stage was most effective, and guest choreographer, **Jerry Opdenaker's** work for "La Follias' Folie" to music by Vivaldi impressive.

Of the eight works, which included Hering's most recent short film "Interludium," "Dichotomy," with the dancers in vivid red Turkish attire, and "Acquiescence," accompanied by Beethoven's music and a set including a giant, web-filled cube, stood out, with "Conglomerate" being a fitting climax to a thoroughly professional show.

Infinite Movement Ever Evolving, definitely a dance company to watch...



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