

Colorful “Body worlds” (worlds of bodies)

Opposites attract each other - and attract attention as the dancers of the Garth Fagan Company prove.

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Innsbruck – Silence. One would be able to hear a needle drop if it were not for the lady in the front row needing to finish her phone conversation. But the lone dancer on the Dogana stage does not let himself be distracted by such undisciplined expressions of free speech. The title of the first of five pieces with which the Garth Fagan dance company opens the second round of the Innsbruck DanceSummer festival on Tuesday is fittingly “Discipline is Freedom.” The dancers conquer the floor to the sounds of Abdullah Ibrahim and Max Roach – as well as the hearts of the audience. Garth Fagan’s troupe has tall dancers next to short ones, old next to young, black next to white.

The 69-year-old choreographer is too mature for perfection – he prefers an ensemble that swirls against the grain of the usual visual fare. He blends classical with modern elements, charmingly teasing his audience. What seems at first like a warm-up exercise for a ballet class gradually builds to a ravishing demonstration of weightlessness.

The second piece “Feel/ Think” is set to the piano sounds of William Chapman Nyahos and depends on the expressivity of Norwood Pennewell, who weaves gracefully through joy and suffering. Experimental – and musically almost challenging – is the third title. Composer Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon provides a dissonant soundscape for Edge/ Joy, giving the company another opportunity to prove its graceful versatility.

After the break, Guy Thorne, clad in purple, embarks on a rhythmic interpretation of “Talking Drums” that oscillates between gentleness and exuberance. In the energetic finale “From/ Before” the entire company reappears in shimmering costumes. They follow African and Caribbean sounds, swirl through the air to disco-beats, and, wearing rainbow-colored overalls appear like athletic 100 meter sprinters.

Conclusion: a start to finish victory.