

SHOW BUSINESS

DANCE

Y DANCE

Various Artists
The New 14th Street Y
Review by Julia Holland

Launching a new series of dance performances, lectures and master classes, The New 14th Street Y gathered a diverse group of contemporary choreographers who excel at ballet, modern or downtown modern styles for *Y Dance*, an impressive collection of short, colorful pieces.

Israeli-born choreographer Amos Pinhasi opened the evening with the dramatic and bright *Two Sentimental Love Songs*. And sentimental it is, with brilliant red rose petals threading the piece together. Slumping over as if in pain, a stream of velvety petals tumbles out from Pinhasi's mouth, canvassing the stage in red. In a moment of indecision, he plucks the petals from a stemmed rose, ripping them to shreds and tossing them about. His movement becomes fluid and light-hearted; he swings his hips and pantomimes Dalida's nonchalant "Ciao, Ciao" in the manner of cabaret and the *Folies Bergeres*. The shocking splashes of red are wonderful on the dark stage. In a stunning long satin dress of dark burgundy designed by Naoko Nagata, he lifts his skirt in a long frantic run about, and sewn into the toile that gives form to the satin are dozens of red rose petals framed by green leaves. Although the red rose is a common metaphor for love, *Two Sentimental Love Songs* is a fantastic parody of a lost relationship.

Felicia Norton is an exquisite soloist for Mark Dendy's *Frieze*, full of clear precise shapes. With her long extensions and calm, yet intense focus, Norton fully owns the solo, naturally carving her arms into birdlike shapes. The choreography is more careful and concerned

with the body and with shapes than Dendy's more recent large scale work; its simple, beautiful movements are more sensual than his bump-and-grind method as of late.

Matthew Mohr, a member of Merce Cunningham's company, carries the elegant stance of modern dance with him into *Landscape for One*. Percussionist Tobias Ralph accompanies Mohr's entrances and exits with infectious tapping, a lively rhythm that explodes and fades away, giving more life to the forward driven movement. Veterans Eileen Thomas and Andre Boynton perform Susan Marshall's *Arms* with endless carving and swooping of arms, swimming through the space. Connected to each other at the shoulders, they cradle one another, drag each other over and prop each other up. Like Marshall's work, the actions are well-defined and laden with emotion. Here Thomas and Boynton's arms fill the space with near desperate, yet not frantic motion.

Kraig Patterson's *Crackhead Waltz* disappoints the intelligent dance audience. Jennifer Howard, Eden Mazer and Patterson stumble around stage, twitching, purposely off the beat and then head straight into painfully correct ballet sequences. The juxtaposition of the "bad dancing" and the "good dancing" pokes fun at the stereotyped characters that the performers assume, but fails to be funny. The dancing by Howard and Mazer is very precise, perhaps too precise, but the choreographic ideas are unoriginal.

Graham Lustig's *Cadenza*, a fiery contemporary ballet duet, draws the performance to a dramatic close. Jennifer Cavanaugh and Bat Abbit, dressed in delightful French baroque tunics of creamy gold and stockings of bright green, march almost indignantly hand in hand through dips and lifts. Standing about the same height, they bristle with pride and excitement in their exacting movements, which lead them to the floor and through the air. *Cadenza*, while contemporary in movement, retains all the flair and brilliance of a polished ballet performance.

