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## Reviews

### Rebecca Kelly Ballet: A Thoughtful Approach At 25

By Ilona Wall

*Ilona Wall dances with The Suzanne Farrell Ballet Company.*

A 25th-anniversary performance by Rebecca Kelly Ballet, on March 9 at the Gerald W. Lynch Theatre in New York City, was indeed something to celebrate. The company and its featured guest artists looked solid, and the ballets, all choreographed by Kelly, were intriguing. The local première of *Air* and the world première of *Silver Circles*—both danced to original scores—were followed by *The Travelers* (2002) and *José's Dream* (2004). This program demonstrated the dancers' versatility and Kelly's innovative perspective.

*Air*, a trio for two women and a man, was set against a sky-blue backdrop with dancers in flowing blue costumes resembling togas. Mood and clarity of line prevailed, as much of the choreography was stationary. Round lines gave way to flat and angular shapes reminiscent of artwork on Grecian urns. Kelly highlighted the ebb and flow of Martha Gallagher's sparse string music by using solos, then duets, and finally all three dancers. The moments of unison were fleeting and therefore all the more powerful.

The central pas de deux in *Silver Circles* was danced by Therese Wendler and guest Duncan Cooper in sleek, silver costumes that shimmered under the light. Their intertwined, flowing movement was offset by a clump of dancers in tattered black clothing. As the music intensified, the agonized dancers in black slowly pushed the center couple apart. The group tried to keep them separated, but their attempts were thwarted and the couple returned to their opening

# Pointe

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pose, not as innocent as they once were, but triumphantly together. The score by Adrian Carr successfully merged two combating realms, and the subtle shifts in Tony Marques' lighting were extremely effective.

Though not the newest piece on the program, *The Travelers* seemed the freshest, as the dancers took the stage one by one against a city skyline. The pulsating music, credited as "CraigMix," continued relentlessly as six dancers appeared in black street clothes and sat in chairs with one foot on an invisible gas pedal. This lasted just long enough for the image to register and suddenly the stage was flooded with dancers performing explosive movements. After this departure, the city returned and the whole company entered with chairs. What began in a simple row became a diagonal that called to mind seating on an airplane. One dancer introduced a movement, and it flooded throughout the group until the final arresting pulse.

*José's Dream* ended the program on a very different note. As a retelling of *Carmen* from the survivor's point of view—possibly in prison or a mental institution—this was the only narrative ballet and the only one with a melodic score. Kelly did a fair job of telling the story, but seemed at times overwhelmed by the Bizet/Shchedrin music. As in many of her other pieces, however, the strength of *José's Dream* lay in Kelly's thought-provoking approach. After such an evening, one hopes that 25 years are just the beginning for the Rebecca Kelly Ballet.

Rebecca Kelly Ballet in Kelly's  
*The Travelers*

Left: Adrian Burckhardt