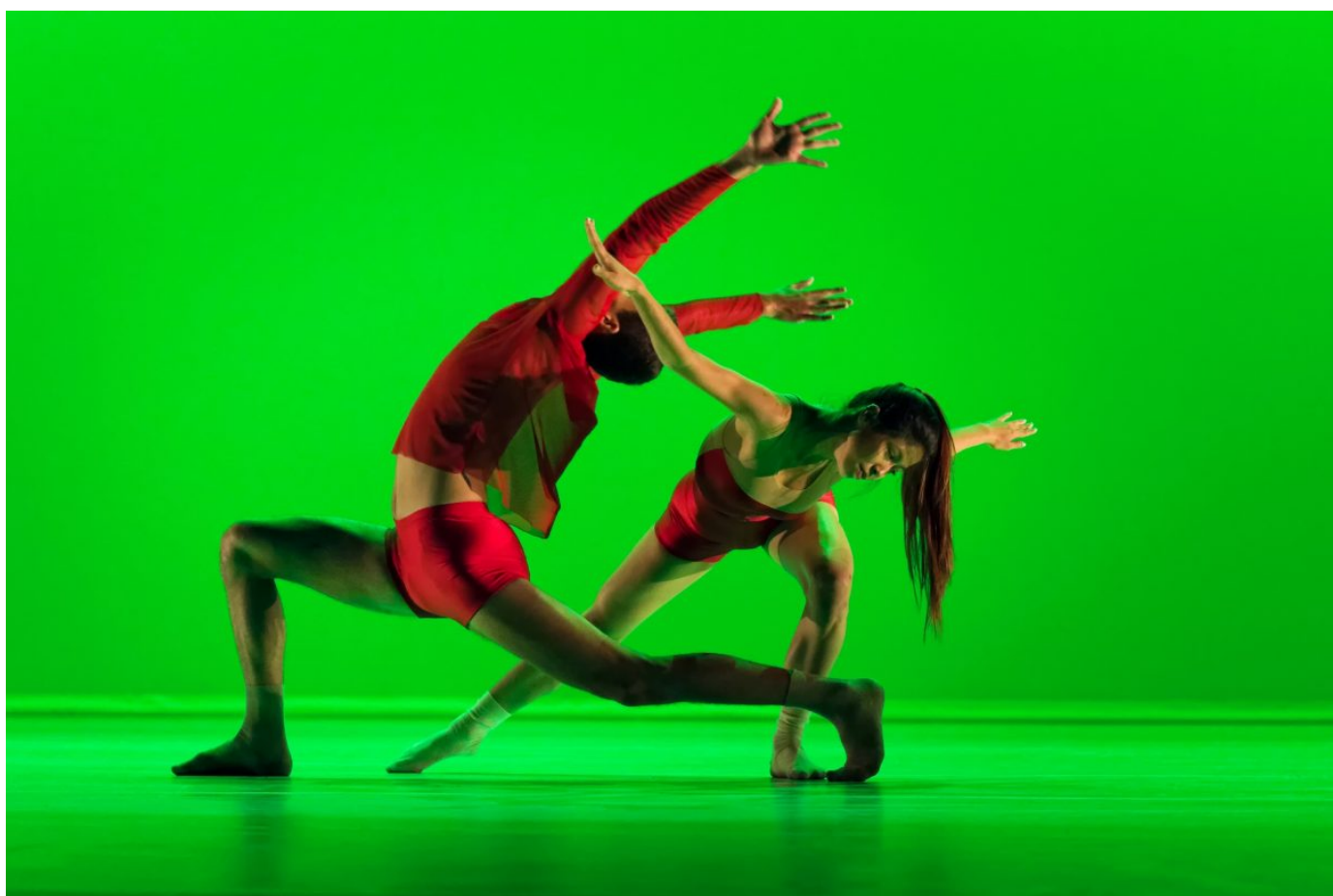




TALENT ON THE MOVE at the Theater de Veste in Delft



When I arrived at the theatre and looked through the programme, which listed eight different pieces, plus a couple of videos, I devised a cunning plan. It would not be possible to review each of the pieces so I would just concentrate on the best two or three and skip the weaker ones. Hmmmm. The problem was there were no weaker ones and even if I was prone to niggling, which I am, I would be hard pressed to find even the mildest criticism of any aspect of the evening's performance. It was all brilliant.

It is self-evident that in any activity which has a limited career span, whether it be dance or sport, it is absolutely vital that young talent is discovered and developed. There are several dance academies in the Netherlands of international standing and, judging by last night's show by third year students from Rotterdam's Codarts, it is easy to see how Holland maintains its position as a world leader in contemporary dance. Although students are from around the globe, as those interviewed in the two video clips testified, they are being taught in the Netherlands and it is that country's styles, influences and way of doing things they will take with them throughout their hopefully long and surely successful careers.

The programme consisted of mainly ensemble work by the twenty-five young dancers, all from established choreographers and some pieces already familiar, notably Jiří Kylián's *Bella Figura*, a favourite from the Nederlands Dans Theater repertoire.

As I said, it is impossible to pick out any highlights and it would be unfair to name any individuals, but I will give a very short run through of some the eight pieces.

Max Richter and Astor Piazzolla are virtually *de rigueur* for any programme of modern dance these days but it was nice to see them sharing the bill for the opening piece, Neel Verdoorn's *Eight Seasons*. This was followed by a very exciting piece called *Ensign* – but easily could have been called *To the Barricades*. The student dancers dressed as . . . err . . . students were in a revolutionary mood with a lot of excited flag waving. The first half of the show was brought to an end by a tremendous, high-octane piece by Joost Vrouenraets called *Boom!* Dressed in white shirts and black trousers, the five girls and four boys whipped up an ever increasing storm in what could be described as a tribal frenzy which put one in mind of a crowd of football fans.

The second half opened with another ensemble piece, *Innocent Children*, involving a lot of chairs, a piece created by the British Alleyne Dance. This was followed by the evening's only solo, Ton Simons' *Still Life III* with Emma Bogerd dancing to Van Morrison's *Ballerina*. The evening ended with an excerpt from Cayetano Soto's *Twenty-Eight Thousand Waves* which, like *Bella Figura* which preceded it, involved men in skirts.

I have a great deal of admiration for dancers. There is perhaps a public perception that it is a glamorous and romantic existence but the truth is that it requires total dedication, abstinence from many of the things on which most young people today base their lives, hours of strenuous and often painful rehearsal and a backstage life that can often be uncomfortable and less than luxurious as these students will no-doubt discover on this twenty-eight venue tour of the Netherlands.

On the strength of tonight's performance I am sure each and every one of them will excel in their chosen profession and I wish them well.

Michael Hasted 8th February 2018



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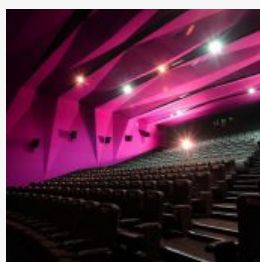
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Some Highlights This Month



This year's rich and varied HOLLAND DANCE FESTIVAL reaches its climax on 10th in Rotterdam with a performance by one of the world's leading modern dance exponents – MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY from America. The Nederlandse Reisopera's SIROE, RE DI PERSIA by Johann Adolf Hasse is on tour until 24th while the Dutch National Opera's THE RAKE'S PROGRESS continues in Amsterdam until 21st. . . .