

# Cultural Daily

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## Millepied, Noé Soulier Dance Pieces at The Wallis

Adam Leipzig · Monday, November 6th, 2017

With elbows and knees, thoracic thrusts at imagined objects, and bodies flopping to only momentary repose, choreographer Noé Soulier invents a new vocabulary in “Second Quartet,” the standout piece at L.A. Dance Project’s residency performance at The Wallis.

LADP is now in residence at The Wallis, cause for celebration among Los Angeles’ dance fans. The Wallis’ accommodating stage, an intimate 500-seat venue, is the perfect place to experience dance, and under the overall artistic direction of Paul Crewes, dance is the most exciting programming at The Wallis.

“Second Quartet” is the only piece in the recent LADP program not choreographed by Benjamin Millepied, LADP’s artistic director. The opening piece, “Closer,” by Millepied, features David Adrian Freeland, Jr., and Janie Taylor in a clingy duet that scans the stages of relationship. With “In Silence We Speak,” Millepied extends his pas de deux range further, with Rachelle Rafeiledes and Janine Taylor becoming both supporters and echoes of each other.



The Wallis’ Company-in-Residence L.A. Dance Project performing the West Coast Premiere of In Silence We Speak on Thursday, November 2. Pictured (l-r): Rachelle Rafeiledes and Janie Taylor. Photo credit: Lawrence K. Ho.

Millepied’s strength, in these two pieces, is his formal appreciation of classical technique, coupled with unexpected intimacy and human connection between the dancers. It is a pleasure, rare in Los Angeles, to watch dancers so well trained and rehearsed.

“Orpheus Highway,” the show’s finale and the third piece by Millepied, pairs projection with onstage dancers who at times mirror, and at times contradict, the film that appears larger-than-life behind them. Set in the California desert, this retelling of the Orpheus myth features the full company. The mixture of projection and live performance do not fully integrate, in that they do not combine to a profound and emotional effect; rather the projections serve to set a desert scene in a manner that stage design or lighting could have done. It’s hard to see the point of the exercise.



The Wallis’ Company-in-Residence L.A. Dance Project performing the West Coast Premiere of Orpheus Highway on Thursday, November 2. Pictured (l-r): Rachelle Rafeiledes and David Adrian Freeland Jr. Photo credit: Lawrence K. Ho.

But let's get back to "Second Quartet." Dancers Aaron Carr, David Adrian Freeland, Jr., Nathan Makolandra, and Rachelle Rafeiledes embody an unexpected and revelatory alphabet of movement. Choreographer Soulier explains that he has created movements that "are motivated by concrete goals — such as avoiding, striking, throwing, pushing, and resisting — but impeded through the use of specific strategies. The targeted objects are not present, or body parts used during the movements are ill-suited for their goals."

What begins as an experiment becomes joyous exploration. Rarely does one get to see new forms of movement. This augurs well for LADP's next in-residence performance at The Wallis, which will take place April 5-7, 2018.

*Top photo: The Wallis' Company-in-Residence L.A. Dance Project performing Second Quartet on Thursday, November 2. Pictured (l-r): David Adrian Freeland Jr., Nathan Makolandra and Aaron Carr. Photo credit: Lawrence K. Ho.*

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