Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Sara Mearns in A Day's Work

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, October 1st, 2014

In my ongoing love affair with the marriage of dance and film and the relatively young genre of screen dance, I can still watch dance shorts for hours. I remain completely compelled by films in which pure movement dynamics, concept, context, and form are meeting the camera and playing together in new ways at vital intersections. I am frequently moved most by dance shorts that include real people, or happen in real locations — rather than only in studios or on sound stages.

Like when the dancers of Tanztheater Wuppertal take to the streets, parks, city buses, and stairways in Wim Wenders' Academy-nominated **Pina,** or Mitchell Rose's wonderful internationally shot and crowd sourced short **Globe Trot.** These are films that level the playing field and spread the mantle of dance to the masses. But what about short dance docs… Many of which serve to inform as well as to inspire?

In the studio with Sara Mearns

Enter **A Day's Work**, a really lovely short dance doc featuring New York City Ballet Principal Sara Mearns.

As the film opens with Sara unceremoniously and unglamorously removing her stage make up, we hear candid voiceover of her talking about the experience and business of performing, what she takes away with her, and what she leaves behind. We see her in her apartment getting ready for her day, wrapping her legs in plastic, taping her toes, stretching between the sofa and the coffee table. W see the daily rigor of company class as we hear both about where she came from and the ultimate decision and sacrifices she made at a very early age in order to become a ballerina. Sara speaks honestly about the insecurities dancers face, and about the enigma of dancers being both athletes and artists, and of the almost inevitable injuries that dancers must grapple with. As her day progresses she is seen in rehearsal with talented emerging choreographer, my dear friend/frequent collaborator & dancer, Andrea Schermoly, finding the line, form and flow in a solo being made for an upcoming festival.

A Day's Work is an honest portrayal of the incredible dedication, hard *physical* work, and focus it takes to be a professional dancer. Made by former ballet dancer turned filmmaker Ezra Hurwitz, **A Day's Work** is at once sensitive, compelling, and telling. I love how it demystifies the business of dance, and I particularly love how Sara in talking about the necessary union of mind, body and spirit in dance says, *"I never say I'm going to work. I always say I'm going to the theater."*

Enjoy.

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