

Labayen Dance's Winter Season at Dance Mission Theatre, San Francisco January 2011

"I saw in the choreography much more of the matter of the man and substance Enrico Labayen is, by the work ecstatically relayed thru his dances and dancers."

My only real regret for the night was arriving at the last performance – This was something I would have seen over and over again. It was something I had never witnessed before. I interpreted one dance totally different. It was danced to perfection by the stunning David Chase, Clover Mathis and Victor Talledos. It might have been a love triangle except I kept getting an undercurrent of meaning in the dance. I was surprised by the special effects at the dance's end when I saw a bolt of sunlight in a bag pulled out of Victor's pants! Of course once I heard "Ikarus", it all made sense.



Victor Talledos in Icarus with David Chase & Clover Mathis

"Frida: Broken Column" I knew meant something totally different than what my eyes witnessed. The woman in red, Hecate (performed exquisitely by Brazilian dance diva, Daiane Lopes da Silva), the crone mother (by the beautifully elegant and statuesque Daiane Mateo) with her blood maiden child. The dance with Frida Kahlo's images on the back wall worked so incredibly well to progress the narrative and imagery; the red string pulled from Mother as the maiden became mother and mother became crone. Tears came rolling down my cheeks as I controlled my sobbing. Memories of Ms. Kahlo's life - her pain, courage and triumphs overwhelms and Enrico Labayen's "Frida: Broken Column" reminded us that nothing is impossible.

"Glass", then on stage arrived the Maenads dancing. The women in silver dresses!! Playing in the Elysian Fields ending with a spotlight on one woman (gorgeously controlled dancing by Ms. Lopes da Silva) who became the the Goddess as Moon, Diana. When the lights went down I gasped as I craved more! I got my wish!



Daiane Lopes and Talledos in "Glass"

Over to my left, the silver clad dancers lead by the dynamic and lighting speed dancer Leda Pennell and Never Navarro with the effervescent presence of Mr. Talledos returned, dancing swiftly with his muses and a bevy of gorgeousness from Irene Hsiao, Karen Meyers, Alyson Abriel and Jaidah Terry. Their movements different – the pulse more intense. A woman in gold appeared and I lost it! I bolted upright in my chair bathed in golden light. My body became rigid. The gold slipped from her dress down onto the stage and into the audience. Kundalini gold ripped up my spine and spilled out to the room.



Diane Mateo & Lopez in "Frida: Broken Column"

I could not breathe or I felt I would lose this moment. Such incredible beauty in each step Ms. Lopes da Silva made. She seemed to be floating not walking or dancing. This woman in gold though, she walked in a straight line directly towards the audience. I know who she was, I had not seen her (in person) for a long time. I called out her name, Au-set. The Greeks translated it as Isis.

I felt bathed in what Labayen choreographed thru her for us the watchers. I felt the audience at this moment as no one breathed. We were captured by that skin tight dress, her absolute heaven inspired movements, and then came her lover (the fiery Mr. Talledos) – the Shiva to her Shakti – and they played out ancient rituals for the promise of renewal. These rites have been performed thru the ages. I just have never seen like this before – well on this side of the astral.

I saw in the choreography much more of the matter of the man and substance Enrico Labayen is, by the work ecstatically relayed thru his dances and dancers.

Dr. Derek Ranch is a Ph.D in Performance and Hellenic Studies at Stanford University. Resides in Germany & writes for EU Magazine, BalletTanz on line & other scholastic publications.