

**Enrico Labayen's
CARMINA BURANA: REVISITED**

By Eugene Lee July 28, 2010

I was treated to a new work by Labayen Dance company choreographed by Enrico Labayen at Dance Mission Theatre. This was a creative and impactful setting to Carl Orff's Carmina Burana, which in Labayen's own words features "strong women that will kick your ass and look good while doing it."

The music by Carl Orff, especially the opening movement, is very popular in dance recitals, but it is rare to see such a large amount of Carmina set to dance. Labayen's work is set to 21 movements of Orff's piece, with a total running time of just under an hour, during which time the audience is treated to a wide range of dramatic moves, impactful visuals, and a true rising dance star in Daiane Lopes.



Daiane Lopes, a true rising dance star.

Dance Mission Theatre is an intimate space with a smallish stage, which heightens the power of the performance. At moments the dancers are right up front with the audience, and in one case even crossing the "audience-performer plane". The theatre is ideal for this kind of performance, and the dancers' facial gestures and eye contact lent an extra degree of drama and impact to the piece.

From the very opening, which hits you right between the eyes with a surprisingly dramatic rapid drop to the floor, we knew we were in for something of substance. "O Fortuna" was full of dance moves that were tribal, ritualistic, and creating unique shapes; "Veris Leta Facis" was slow and languorous, involving almost yoga-like motions. "Tanz" was folk dance-like, integrating the bright red long skirts into the flowing choreography. Throughout the various movements I enjoyed Labayen's interesting integration of ballet, contemporary, lyrical and folk dance styles and motions.

"From the very opening, which hits you right between the eyes with a surprisingly dramatic rapid drop to the floor, we knew we were in for something of substance."



Labayen's interesting integration of ballet, contemporary, lyrical and folk dance styles and motions

But by far the real highlight of the performance was the lead dancer for the piece, Brazilian-born Daiane Lopes. Her movements were powerfully dramatic but controlled and crisp, her lines were evocative and well-suited to the music, and her eye contact and facial expressions were intensely dramatic, engaging, and powerfully evocative. Her various solos were real tours de force, especially "Circa Mea Pectora".



Strong women that will kick your ass and look good doing it.

During intermission I spoke with Laura Bernasconi, guest rehearsal director for the company, who informed me that the dancers' commitment to the work is beyond question, juggling school, work and family, they have been preparing the piece for 4 months. This is a dance company worth checking out in the future – both to see Labayen's creative choreography as well as to enjoy Daiane Lopes' enormous talent. I encourage people to go out and not only support dance, but also have a great evening!

