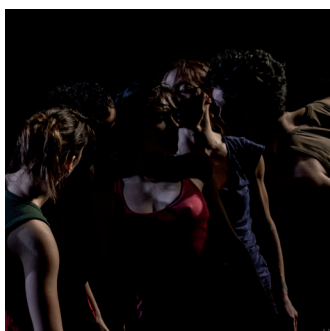
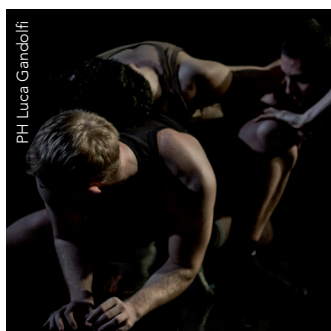


SPELLBOUND DANCE COMPANY BRINGS PHYSICAL ARTISTRY TO KRAVIS SHOW, BY PALM BEACH DAILY NEWS APRIL, 2013

By Susan Fulks
Special to the Daily News



Spellbound Dance Company opened a series of performances at the Kravis Center's Rinker Playhouse on Thursday with an artfully crafted evening of extraordinary dancing.

The artistic product delivered by the Italian company is atmospheric and powerful because of the stark lighting, minimal costuming, intensely physical movement and the dancers' beautifully sculpted physiques.

The troupe presented *Lost for Words*, *She is on the Ground* and *Downshifting* - three distinct pieces that were tasteful in length and choreographed to emotive and evocative scores. Mauro Astolfi, the company's artistic director, created all three works - and while his movement vocabulary is recognizable throughout, he keeps things fresh by exploring a range of emotions and moods.

The first work, *Lost for Words*, opens with pulsing music accompanied by the voice of an American male speaking complex phrases that sound deep but lack comprehensive meaning. This sets up the central metaphor around which the piece appears to revolve. Duets and other groupings of dancers execute fluid yet punctuated movement with such physical control that they are completely silent moving across the floor. The music evolves through different genres, which contributes to the momentum of the piece.

The second work is *She is on the Ground*, a recent creation that has a lighthearted, even comedic, air about it. It is a humorous commentary on the lengths to which men will go in their quests to impress

women, who in the end hold all of the real power of seduction. The music, costuming and movement are all more playful in this work, and even though the design is somewhat abstract, the moral of the piece is clearly portrayed. And, the dancing is superb.

It is a hypnotic, almost spiritual experience to witness the artists of Spellbound in general, but this is most striking in *Downshifting*, which closes the program. It is refreshing to see an ensemble work that concludes with a duet (the final couple remains onstage while the light fades). Choreographers of all genres tend to adhere to the convention that each piece must end with the entire ensemble on stage for a finale.

It is difficult to describe the physical splendor of the Spellbound Dance Company. The troupe has an alien beauty to its movement that has become the touchstone of reputable contemporary dance. The performers are magnificent in appearance, and their technique is remarkable.

While the abstract nature of works such as *Lost for Words* and *Downshifting* run the risk of becoming tiresome or repetitious, Spellbound (as the name implies) puts its audience into a trance instead. More contemporary dance companies could take a lesson from Astolfi's artistic sensibilities, for he proves the value of employing ballet companies' physical aesthetic as a point of departure for presenting contemporary dance.

SPELLBOUND
CONTEMPORARY BALLET

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