



Christopher Duggan

Matthew 'Megawatt' West, Ephrat 'Bounce' Asherie and Manon Bal in Ephrat Asherie Dance's 'Odeon' at Jacob's Pillow.

ON DANCE: Ephrat Asherie's 'Odeon' at The Pillow is extraordinary

By Liz Thompson | Saturday, Jun 30, 2018

Ephrat Asherie creates a world I want to live in.

Yes, I would love to be able to move like the company. Yes, I would like to be as remarkable as the musicians. OK, that is not possible in this lifetime. What else in this lifetime seems less and less possible is a world of inclusion and respect.

A visit to Ephrat's world is uplifting. She speaks eloquently of how the club culture is warm and welcoming to individuals no matter how they identify. All of this is quite clearly manifested in "Odeon" — the dancers and musicians work within a framework created by Asherie. That said, there are moments of improvisation that, while not obvious to the audience, infuse the evening



Ephrat 'Bounce' Asherie in Ephrat Asherie Dance's 'Odeon' at Jacob's Pillow. Photo: Christopher Duggan

with abundant energy and joy. The key here is that both the choreographer and musical director honor and trust their collaborators.

The piece opens with a conversation that sets the stage for the rest of the work that is about relationships — between dancers, between dancers and musicians, between the musicians, between movement and sound. In partnership with her brother, Ehud Asherie, she presents a visceral and intellectual exploration of the music of Ernesto Nazareth and dance.

The language of this opening conversation is rhythm. The dancers clap words, sentences, paragraphs. These conversations are brought back throughout the dance and are created in movement relationships as well as rhythm. The “stories” they appear to create are left up to the observer.

The movement vocabulary is stunning and unique.

Ephrat has sourced many contemporary forms — hip hop, break, b-boy, b-girl, etc. — and many musical traditions. The work is worthy of a scholarly exposition of the movement

and musical resources, but let me simply state that “Odeon” is real, honest and breathtaking. It is beautifully crafted — unique movement gently arranged in traditional ways, the use of unison juxtaposed with mind-blowing solos, silence punctuating dense sound. At times, individual performances are scattered in seemingly random fashion. Asherie lets us decide what to watch just as she lets us create our own stories while watching the performers interact.

The dancers and musicians are stellar. The work is a gift.

Would that our current culture was as inclusive, adventuresome, authentic and joyful.



Ousmane 'Omari Mizrahi' Wiles in Ephrat Asherie Dance's 'Odeon' at Jacob's Pillow. Photo: Christopher Duggan

Ephrat Asherie Dance performs in the Doris Duke Theatre at Jacob's Pillow, 358 George Carter Road, Becket, Massachusetts, through Sunday, July 1. For information and tickets, see the Berkshire Edge calendar, go online to jacobspillow.org or call the box office at (413) 243-0745.

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