

DANZA & DANZAWEB

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PASCAL RIOULT CHOREOGRAPHER DIVIDED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Pascal Rioult a reference point in American Contemporary dance, is currently in Italy on tour with his company RIOULT Dance NY performing the “Ravel Project” at Teatro Nuovo Giovanni da Udine and the Italian premiere of “Bach Dances” at Teatro Comunale Pavarotti da Modena. Choreographer, Pascal Rioult was a former dancer in the company of Martha Graham for 10 years; she served as his mentor. These two programs dedicated to great composers, affirms the primacy of music in Rioult’s choreography in style and breadth. His ensemble, indisputably American in its style and technical rigor is structured on a French imprint—in fact the choreographer is from Normandy. “No one can escape their cultural influences,” says Rioult, training during one’s youth remains embossed in ones psyche and emerges in ones work subconsciously.

Regarding music choices, it is clear music is a strong influence on Rioult’s choreography: the son of a pianist, listening to music every day, he learned composition. “I attribute the success of my career as a dancer and choreographer to my love of music and the need for physical activity. Dance is a perfect marriage.”

How does Martha Graham’s vision of man’s inherent centricity and his role in society reflect in your work?

“Dance is an expression of humanity. The body does not lie it memorizes a collective conscience, a sort of muscle memory that just needs to come out. My work is often a little more abstract in respect to Graham’s, but in the end, always shows the same sort of problems. It wasn’t by accident that I found myself dancing for Martha.”

How important is it today to recognize dancers’ work?

Dancers are exceptional human beings that give me enormous joy and for whom I have profound respect. They give me so much of their lives; of themselves physically and emotionally. They are so fragile yet so strong, they are afraid of nothing except not being good enough to do what they have been asked... They are involved in the choreographic process giving themselves to the work. My research also evolves through their stories.

Ravel's music has gone beyond national borders as has your dance. What did you find in America?

In America I found the cradle of contemporary dance, a dance anchored to the ground not in fairy tales or 'intellectualism'. I discovered Martha Graham and George Balanchine. My place in the world of dance and my work, in particular, are a confluence of my European culture and American influences. America has an open mind: 'Anything is possible.' There are fewer cultural prejudices. For sure the arts business is very complicated, but I have adapted and survived for 20 years with my company.

What is absolutely French in your domain?

French Romanticism for example, is never far away even when it is of an abstract nature. Neo-classicism has had a big influence on my work; French architecture, impressionist music.

What are your next programs?

After staying away from Greek themes for a long time, something for which Martha was a specialist, I am now working on a Greek triptych. "Women on the Edge...the anti-heroines of the Trojan War,' based on the tragedy by Euripides. I've commissioned music from young American classical composers. I've choreographed two dances: Helen of Troy and Iphigenia; I will complete the program in my 2015-2016 home season.