

DANCE

Take Dance Company

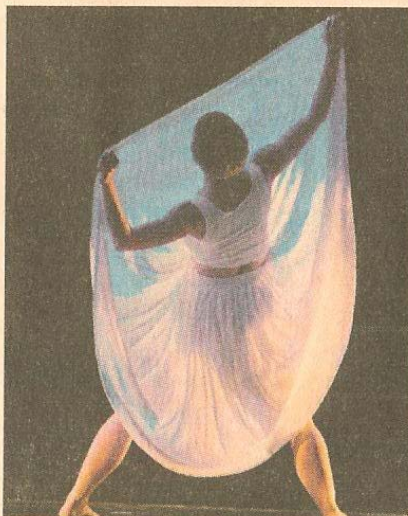
Miller Theatre, New York

Tokyo-born Takehiro Ueyama wanted to be a baseball player until, rather later than most would-be dancers, he switched his ambitions and moved to New York to study at Juilliard. After a stint with the Martha Graham Ensemble he joined the Paul Taylor Company and eight years later formed his own troupe, Take (pronounced Tak-ay). Although there is a Japanese subtlety in Ueyama's choreography, Taylor's influence is far more apparent – Ueyama still dances with all the sweep and elasticity that that company imbued in him.

Looking For Water, first seen last year, has a gentle timelessness to its opening, where Jason Jeunette and Mark Wiener's visual effects scroll across a black backdrop like puffs of exhaled smoke. Against it, three white-clad dancers sink and stretch as if dipping in water. They are joined by others, who move in unison, stretching and pacing slowly, long skirts swirling, to Damian Eckstein's music, with sounds like distant train sirens punctuating a percussive beat.

Kate Hirstein dances a solo prone on the floor, languidly moving her arms like wings. The tempo picks up and all seven dancers whirl about, flipping up their long skirts (the men wear them too), jumping and snatching up their feet as if dancing on something hot. There is no literal seeking of water in this abstract piece but there are aquatic images, such as everyone swaying back and forth like sea anemones.

For *Love Stories*, a pas de deux



Swirling: 'Looking for Water' Philip Echo

divided into sections by brief blackouts, two chairs – that oft-used prop for lover's duets – are carried on by Nana Tsuda and Kile Hotchkiss, a tall, blond agile dancer of impressive abilities. They are a tumultuous twosome, dancing light-heartedly to Glen Hansard and Marketa Irglova's jazzy "The Swell Season" but things get rough as lovers' quarrels do: the chairs are changed to face another way but their occupants' attitudes remain fixed. In the sad little ending, the two, wearing white veils, writhe together until he sinks to the floor, apparently dead. She removes the veils and holds them up. Sheer bathos. Except somehow it isn't.

The short solo *Hula*, choreographed by the Spanish choreographer Asun Noales to music by Bach and Handel (why always his largo, "Ombra mai fù"?), for Ueyama, exploited his persuasive ability to project power and lightness. A new work, *Linked*, presumably intended as a light-hearted frolic, was remorselessly upbeat, everyone grinning and rushing about to Pat Metheny's score, jumping beans exiting and entering at dizzying speed, surely Taylor-inspired if not Taylor-made. ★★☆☆☆
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