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Dance

Full Circle goes 'B.A.R.E.' in celebration of bodies

November 03, 2011 | By Carolyn Kelemen

Director Donna L. Jacobs has once again put her dancers in the "hot seat."

For this weekend's concerts at the Baltimore Museum of Art, her **Full Circle Dance Company** is tackling the loaded topic of body image with the company's premiere of "B.A.R.E.," an abbreviation for "Bodies, Attitudes, Reflections, Exposed."

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As with its past themed projects touching on faith, motherhood, race, and even the fear of the unknown, this Baltimore-based company has invited the community to take part in its artistic exploration.

"We come up with our themes by brainstorming together, talking about ideas, and seeing what resonates," noted the director.

"Body image is something all dancers are concerned with, and we found as we discussed it that many of our choreographers and dancers felt they had something to say about the issue."

True, dancers do obsess about their bodies — with good reason. They are constantly checking themselves in the mirrors during class and rehearsals. Which was exactly what happened during last week's rehearsal at the company's spacious warehouse studio in the Hampden section of Baltimore.

"Our process involves sharing ideas, stories, feelings, and often tears. When a subject really generates a lot of response, it is probably one we can make substantial work around," Jacobs emphasized.

"One of our dancers came up with the acronym, 'B.A.R.E.,' and we just felt it fit our program perfectly."

Full Circle has nothing to worry about when it comes to well-trained dancers. With a solid corps of dancers, some who have been with the company for 10-plus years, this troupe always looks in top shape. This season there are some new faces in the pack, younger dancers to complement the veterans.

While the troupe itself is based in Baltimore, Jacobs is a longtime Howard County resident. Even so, Full Circle Dance hasn't performed in Howard County since the 2009 "Celebration of the Arts" gala.

Jacobs' choreography has been featured in the Broadway Dance Center's "Best of Showcase," and she has been inducted into the "Circle of Excellence" three times for her professional accomplishments. Jacobs is also a senior vice president at the University of Maryland Medical System, and director of the Morton Street Dance Center.

Full Circle Dance Company is a multi-ethnic professional ensemble that performs choreography from a variety of modern dance traditions that largely reflect the diverse backgrounds of the dancers.

"B.A.R.E." highlights include a dance of frustration at the absurdity of "one size fits all" clothing labels, a work built from the words and worries of folks who shared their body secrets via anonymous postcards and a celebration of the body's incredible potential and power, choreographed by visiting artist Travis Gatling, whose work continues to impress year after year.

"Our company means different things to different people," says Liz Pelton, a veteran Full Circle member and the company's publicist.

"One of the loveliest qualities is the richness and textures of the dancers' backgrounds. You lay that out on top of some great choreography and you have a compelling production."

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It's always a treat to watch Pelton perform. Her fluid style is perfectly in sync with her lithe body.

Hope Byers, a dancing dynamo and award-winning choreographer, is sure to soar in Gatling's power piece. Returning company members include Krystle Henry and Theresa DeAngelo, who impressed us with a dreamy rendition of "The Unconscious" a few years back. New commissions include works by Gatling, Jacobs, Byers, Kakuti Lin, Timothy Phelps, Allison Powell and Jenny Seye.

"I want audiences to go to the theater and have an experience that relates to them, so that someone who isn't necessarily a dance enthusiast can get something out of it," added the director.

The Full Circle Dance Company presents the debut of "B.A.R.E." at the BMA's Meyerhoff Auditorium Friday and Saturday, Nov. 4-5, at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20, payable by cash or check at the door, or by credit card by calling 410-235-9003 or going to <http://fullcircledance.webs.com>.

Ballet abounds in D.C.

Back by popular demand, the **Washington Ballet's** mega-hit **"The Great Gatsby"** wraps up its return engagement at the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Theater this Sunday, Nov. 6, at 6:30 p.m. The jazz-age splendor captured in F. Scott Fitzgerald's original novel about obsession, wealth and excess in the Roaring '20s is brought to life via Septime Webre's choreographic staging.

Don't miss this evening of explosive and swooning dance, accompanied by live music. It's a must-see for fans of hot jazz and wild times. Tickets start at \$29, available at <http://www.kennedy-center.org>. Call the toll-free hot line at 800-444-1324 for availability.

A rare treat for balletomanes, the world-famous prima ballerina **Nina Ananiashvili** performs three ballets by acclaimed choreographer Alexei Ratmansky at George Washington University's Lisner Auditorium this Sunday, Nov. 6, at 6:30 p.m. The performance includes principal dancers from the **State Ballet of Georgia**, accompanied by Russian musicians.

The program consists of the three ballets "Charms of Mannerism," "Bizet Variations" and "Dreams About Japan." Other star dancers from Russia and Georgia are featured in this one-night-only concert. To reserve seats (\$45-\$115), call 202-397-SEAT or go to <http://www.ticketmaster.com>.

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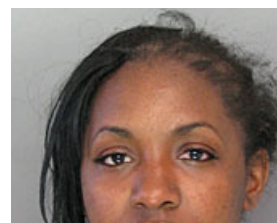
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