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### **writers on dancing**

**December 08, 2008**

#### **Singulars**

**„Dos Mundos“**

**Fuego Flamenco IV – International Festival**

**Gala Hispanic Theatre at the Tivoli**

**Washington, DC**

**December 6, 2008**

**by George Jackson**

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Some flames burn with a cold light, some generate heat and still others smolder. The three individuals who starred on the final bill of Gala's fourth annual flamenco festival differed physically and temperamentally. That they shared the percussive footwork of flamenco and additional technical traits seemed secondary. This was a night of solo forays by Edwin Aparicio – the seeker, magisterial La Tati and seductive Defne Enc. Each of the three seemed apart despite backup by group dancers and dialogue with five fine musicians.

Aparicio, who arranged the program, showed Enc first. Slim and supple in her long, black but brightly flowered dress, she folds her body's length into sinuous waves. These she sends into space as if broadcasting the news of her inviting presence. Enc's solo wasn't a come-on, though, but an invitation to look and wonder why a woman so attractive dances all alone. That was its mystery, which the dancer conveyed seriously except, on occasion, when she would laugh at herself.

The clarity of Aparicio's footwork is visual and acoustic. Start and stop register as instants and as durations. Patterns of move-and-halt and of sound-and-silence are formed. At times Aparicio uses the heel for coloratura trills or taconeos runs, with the resulting thrill seeming a counterpart to that produced by ballet's most exquisite taquete (stitch steps) for pointe shoes. Claps and slaps sometimes enhance the pulse of Aparicio's footwork but quite distinctive for this dancer is his use of the suit jacket. He wears his jackets normally – slipped into the arms and over his torso – yet he plays with them. He will even worry a jacket as if it were a cape. This piece of apparel helps to isolate him as he explores surrounding space. Aparicio delivering a solo seems to be alone in the universe. Often he peers ahead, as if intent on a goal. What might that goal be, and for whom is Aparicio's outpouring of steps and tones meant? This dancer, too, is cloaked in mystery.

The first entrance of LaTati (Francisca Sadornil Ruiz) was awesome. Not only did her steps resound but so did the cane she used for her slow advance. Was she blind? Or did she need the cane to maintain balance? Neither was the case. The cane was her instrument of power. This was La Tati as the ultimate

matriarch - Lorca's Bernarda Alba. She measured out movement precisely, often with her eyes downcast. Her rhythmic shifts excite like Wagnerian modulations. When suddenly she opens her eyes wide and looks up and out triumphantly, a torrent of steps explodes from her base. This solo was about the triumph of the will. La Tati's return solo showed her enjoying life, even flirting. Movement came faster. She parodied steps, grew impatient with the train of her dress and took to kicking it out of the way. Still, this wasn't a woman to take lightly. Triflers beware!

Can flamenco work in group choreography? It didn't on this program. The members of Aparicio's company looked hypnotized as they attempted to coordinate their tapping and tried to stamp cohesively. Flamenco is meant to express individuality and becomes something else without it. The "Two Worlds" of the program's title turned out not to be those of tradition and innovation, which should always go hand-in-hand and did so this time, but the worlds of the one and the many. Aparicio's next challenge is what to do with his corps de ballet.

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