

December 11, 2007  
Dance Review

## *Choreographers Stretch Visions In and Out of the Box*

By JENNIFER DUNNING

Showcases can be deadly, but the selection of choreographers for the NuDance Festival on Saturday night at Theater of the Riverside Church was unusually good. The artists came from a wide range of backgrounds, including Broadway, mainstream modern dance and hip-hop. Nearly everyone had something distinctively personal to say, for the most part stylistically. The festival, a platform for new and midcareer artists, summoned memories of the theater's history as a major presenter of dance.



Ruby Washington/The New York Times

From left, Elisabeth Rainer, Yeon Seon Yoo and Hyosun Choi in Ginger Cox's "InsideOut."

The evening opened with Greg King's "Linger Longer"; this solo was a perfect, sensitive showpiece for Kristina Bethel, a long-limbed dancer with a quietly intense stage presence. In "InsideOut," Ginger Cox took a box structure made of poles and fashioned it into the equivalent of a house and a jungle gym for four female dancers to hang and stretch from.

### **NuDance Festival** The Riverside Theatre

"Love Endeavor-sss (an URBAN pas de deux)," choreographed by Hope Boykin, an Alvin Ailey dancer, covered the familiar territory of the love-'em-and-leave-'em romantic duet. But the gestures and plotting were fresh, in part because of the resonant technical skills of Khiara Bridges and Ephraim Sykes, who performed the piece. Ms. Boykin is clearly a choreographer with a voice of her own.

So is Erica Essner, whose "Back to Tijuca," an inventive group piece for transient couples, was consistently, unself-consciously quirky in the best way. Akiko Furukawa stood out for the cheeky

nonchalance of her performing. Lakai Worrell's "Fitnah" was a work in progress that may receive the editing it needs to make its points about dying and living more strongly. The gutsy dancers were led by Keon Nickie as a gentle figure of death.

Sidra Bell's "Without Words" was a spiraling love duet performed by Antonio Brown and Jacquie Dumas with the flowing abandon of fabric caught in wind. The evening closed with Daniel Catanach's "Mambo," a hodgepodge of very ordinary dance scraps performed in part, unnecessarily, on point. Here and throughout the program the level of dancing was impressive.