

MAG ZINE DANCE

**Snappy Dance Theater
Cutler Majestic Theatre
Boston, Massachusetts
June 4–5, 2004
Reviewed by Iris Fanger**

The author-illustrator Edward Gorey created a world in which things and people went bump in the night, never to be heard from again. He was also a ballet lover who attended the New York City Ballet regularly for decades before moving to Cape Cod, so it's no wonder that the Boston-area Snappy Dance Theater found inspiration for its first long piece, *The Temperamental Wobble*, in his short picture-stories.

The seven-member company works in collaborative fashion under the artistic direction of Martha Mason, who also performs. Their appealing mélange of movement, drawn from every corner of human endeavor—modern dance and ballet, circus, gymnastics, the street, and the odd turns of fantastic nature—transformed the Gorey menagerie into theatrical characters. A large bear of a man (Sean Kilbridge), wearing overcoat and tennis shoes, was surely meant to represent the author as voyeur, flourishing his umbrella as a pen to draw forth a succession of crosshatched line drawings from Gorey's works on a rear scrim. Two men (Jeremy Towle, Tim Gallagher) intertwined wheelbarrow fashion into a fey creature who comforted the perhaps overly Innocent Child (Bonnie Duncan, skittering on her knees to convey her age); a trio of female ghosts climbed slow-motion from behind tombstones, balancing up and over them. Three smiling acrobats, so busy flexing their muscles that they fell on top of each other, bumped unexpectedly into a body from the previous episode, hanging on a hook at stage right. The appealing score of minor-key melodies, combined with a spectrum of grunts, squeaks, and groans, was commissioned from the German composer Michael Rodach.

The company got the tone right—particularly for "The Lavendar Leotard," an oblique take on ballet technique gone wrong, and the narrative of the Innocent Child, which were staged in full—but the work needed an editorial eye to extract the gold from the parade of unconnected vignettes that criss-crossed the stage for nearly an hour and a quarter. In contrast, the first part of the evening, five repertory works, satisfied, delivering the company's signature brand of choreography: brief, often amusing, and tailored to their considerable talents.

For more information: www.snappydance.com

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