

Dance Festival unveils a glimpse of the future

The future of modern dance is in interesting hands. On Tuesday night at Duke University's Bryan Center, three young choreographers and composers in residence performed works they had created this summer, commissioned by the American Dance Festival. The dancers showed lithe, beautifully coordinated bodies,

while the musicians gave us atonality. Both choreographer and musician shared bows at the end of each presentation.

Pooh Kaye began with "Wild-Fields" to appropriately insect-like music by Michael Kosch as we participated in the daily life of black ants. Realistic movements and activities done with flair and humor made us feel more attuned to the six-legged world.

"Climbing the Waltz" by Stephanie Skura with music by Frank McCarty followed with less success. The title pun referred to those times when things don't go

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as planned: blunders, embarrassments, jokes with lost punch lines, etc. Early on, one dancer shouted, "I hate modern dance!" Then, the four dancers and their on-stage musicians showed why, as everything came apart. A comedy of errors could have proved a delightful dance, but this one never took off.

Next, Mark Morris brought us his group of twenty dancers in "Forty Arms, Twenty Necks; One Wreathing" to music by Herschel Garfein. A theme and four variations, each variation employed a chorus figure running in circles to form a wreath. Abstract patterns of body movements with one group mimicked by a second smaller group were performed to a carefully conducted series of shrieks, whistles, thuds and warbles. If the movements had been more exciting, or if the music had had a regular rhythm or melody line, this might have been more gratifying. As it was, one's attention waned. But not being of the generation of these dancers, perhaps I just may not be getting the message.

— HELEN RULISON