



March 19, 2010

Super-Vixens with Troll-Doll Hair Death-Stare Underwear Models in the Matrix

by James Wolcott

Worry beads are often clicked about the graying of the performing arts audience (and there's a basis for concern—I've been to theater and dance performances which looked like 50th anniversary college reunions), but last night's crowd for Keigwin + Company at the Joyce was the youngest, glossiest, best-looking, clearest-complexioned Gossip Girl casting call I've seen. Whether it's word of mouth or social networking or what, Keigwin + Company is attracting the younger audience everyone fears is MIA and, despite the badmouthing younger audiences get, there was a minimum of chatter and cell phone checking—their theater manners were superior to what you often get at the Koch or Met or City Center, where the crinkling of cough-drop wrappers and running commentary from older audience members ("This must be the hunt scene," said as male dancer enters the stage carrying a crossbow) can result in shushing battles so antithetical to the spirit of Ballet.

Or perhaps it's simply that sexy calls to sexy, because K + C's Joyce program is one sexy packet, wired into the overactive nervous system of our ADHD time from "Caffeinated" (coffee cups welded to the palms of career-driven, frenzied, overscheduled urbanites and wielded like spray cans, tipped like medieval mugs, vibrating like milkshake makers) to the phenomenal finale piece "Runaway," which lays down strips of energy that sets Lady Gaga, the multiplying hitmen of The Matrix, the residents of Joss Whedon's Dollhouse, Wigstock, a fashion show, and the flashbulb circus

Keigwin + Company is attracting the younger audience everyone fears is MIA... perhaps it's simply that sexy calls to sexy, because K + C's Joyce program is one sexy packet,

of La Dolce Vita ("Runaway" is what Nine should have been) on an electrical grid in an industrial setting. The dancers march up and down the aisles, across the stage in laterals and diagonals, lose items of clothing each time they disappear in the wings (some of the men emerging like Calvin Klein underwear models), and somehow maintain formation and manic discipline—the moment in which the lead female figure (the blonde idol we see being doted on at the beginning) accelerates from a militant walk into an Amazonian run up the aisle was a thrilling coup d'theater. The current cant word in fashion, courtesy of Tyra Banks and Project Runway, is "fierce," but "Runaway" exemplifies true fierceness, and laser focus, utilizing poses to go beyond poses into new enigmatic terrain. The Rita

Hayworth pose that the female dancers do at the end, their heads clicking sharp toward us over their shoulders—it's the objectifying gaze being swung back with a vengeance.

I'm not going to go into "Birdwatching" and "Mattress Suite" just yet because I don't want to overtalk the evening, but I was struck by how the opening bridal section of "Mattress Suite," which I'd never seen before (I'd only seen the other sections at a benefit performance) establishes a storyline that gives the dance a modern Tudoresque shadowing. The carnality episodically exploding, billowing, from Nicole Wolcott in her bridal gown was quite amazing, like something only hinted at in Tennessee Williams.

Keigwin + Company will be at the Joyce until Sunday, March 21st. You really must go.