

Time Out New York

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Report card '07

WE GRADE THE YEAR
IN ARTS AND CULTURE

The best (and worst) of 2007

By Gia Kourlas

THE BEST...

...Julliard student you pray will stay in New York after graduation

Julliard did an inspiring job resurrecting Twyla Tharp's 1973 *Deuce Coupe*, but Mary Ellen Beaudreau in the ballerina role just bloomed.

...dishy memoir

Carolyn Brown's *Chance and Circumstance: Twenty Years with Cage and Cunningham* is like crack. It's not often that a modern dancer pens a memoir, but this, by a Merce Cunningham veteran, is serious and loaded with personal details, crystallizing a vibrant era of New York dance and art.

...chance to see three works in one dance

DD Dorvillier's *Nothing Is Important*, a "suite of three conditions" performed at the Kitchen, created a world that began in a black box, switched to film and ended with a dance in the dark.

...Butoh dance by the couple that doesn't call what it does Butoh
Eiko & Koma collaborated with the avant-garde pianist Margaret Leng Tan for the remarkable *Mourning* at Japan Society.

...comic antiwar production

Guta Hedewig's supremely witty *Dog Days* or "19 Ways of Looking at a Shrub" made the most of President Bush's butchery of the English language at Danspace Project.

...duet for two beauties who never touch

Maria Hassabi scaled back for *GLORIA*, an austere dance performed by Hristoula Harakas and herself at P.S. 122, in which the performers transformed a series of static acrobatic poses into a searing study of the female form.

...transformation of trash into gold

In *Misuse liable for prosecution*, shown at BAM, John Jasperse used objects only found, borrowed or stolen and managed to show—with impeccable flair—how impoverished a dancer's life is.

...ballet program

American Ballet Theatre's pairing of George Balanchine's *Symphonic Concertante* and Frederick Ashton's *The Dream* was like watching two masters have a conversation. As Titania, Diana Vishneva surpassed even her own usual glamour.

...foreign visitor

Elizabeth Souritz, the distinguished Russian historian, delivered the

keynote lecture at the International Symposium of Russian Ballet, hosted by Barnard College, the Harriman Institute and Columbia University.

...thing to do at the library

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts restored a jewel: the 1965 film of Balanchine's *Don Quixote*, in which the choreographer appears as the Don opposite Suzanne Farrell as Dulcinea.

...reason to corrupt a fairy tale

Ann Liv Young presented her strident and darkly funny take on *Snow White* at the Kitchen; the production took a fascinating turn on itself with the concluding, meticulous radio show.

...excuse to cry like a baby at the ballet

Dancers must, at some point, retire, and this year, we experienced a pair of doozies: Kyra Nichols of New York City Ballet and Alessandra Ferri of American Ballet Theatre hung up their pointe shoes.

THE WORST...

...(but understandable) defections

Miranda Weese and Seth Orza traded New York City Ballet for Pacific Northwest Ballet.

...dance for a Hollywood starlet

God willing, *Edith & Jenny* marks the last time Tamar Rogoff will create a work for Claire Danes—and the last time P.S. 122 will show it.

...new ballet

This is tricky, since there were so many dogs. In chronological order of the crap: Peter Martins's *Romeo + Juliet* for NYCB, ABT's *Sleeping Beauty*, and ABT's recent works by Jorma Elo and Benjamin Millepied.

...exclusion of New York choreographers

Performa 07, the performance-art biennial, gave a deserving generation of artists the cold shoulder in its Dance After Choreography series. Once again, where was Claude Wampler?

Report card: Too many dances that looked like American Apparel ads... Mediocre work disguised as something rigorous... Lousy new ballets made all the more heartbreaking by good dancing... Fairly lackluster curating, especially from BAM and Lincoln Center

FINAL GRADE: B-